The Israeli Torture Story: Bad News
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TRB

from Washington
February 24, 1979

Where's Papa?

America faces some of the hardest decisions in history. It is hungry for leadership. Where is that detested "Imperial Presidency" that we used to distrust, and that Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. decried only six years ago? Instead we have congressional ascendancy and a non-charismatic Carter. Suddenly we want somebody to protect and shield us. America is looking for Papa.

Nobody can doubt the problems. Yes, we're still the richest nation. But America has lost economic dominance—look at the sliding dollar, look at the trade deficit. Yes, we have a lot of warheads. But America has lost nuclear dominance. (We had it just the other day.) Instead we have "rough equivalency." The Soviets continue to spend about 12 percent of their gross national product on defense (45 percent more than comparable US spending, if we believe the latest CIA estimate, which Moscow denies).

That isn't all. We are the lucky nation that with five percent of the world's population uses a third of the world's energy. How long can that go on? Perhaps for a long time. But being an island of affluence (with a few other islands) in an ocean of poverty is precarious. We see that when Iran collapses. And there are other troubles. World population is winning the race with world supplies. (Example: Mexico can't control its population explosion—3.2 percent a year—and will have 100 million by the year 2000. It feels the US has a responsibility to take its surplus people. To reject illegals is being a bad neighbor, it argues.)

Those are some of our discomforts. Obviously we must blame somebody. One job of the presidency is to act as scapegoat. Why doesn't Carter solve our problems? Has he the ability to govern? Why doesn't he cure inflation? He introduced an austerity budget, but liberals say it goes too far; conservatives say it doesn't go far enough.

Carter picked a poor time to be president and came to the White House with no mandate. Any unknown Democrat in 1976 could have beaten the post-Watergate GOP. The empty polling booth elected Jimmy Carter: only 55 percent bothered to vote. Now, after two years, a poll by *The New York Times*-CBS News finds only 40 percent think Carter has "strong leadership qualities" and 55 percent don't. (Note of caution to Republicans, however: Harry Truman was farther down in the polls but made his comeback in 1948.)

Some leaders would be saved by their eloquence. Carter does quite well, I think, in press conferences, in platform question-and-answer. But his State of the Union delivery was terrible. From sublime eloquence to humdrum pedestrianism is often the note in a voice. Why can't Carter sound more imperial?

To be sure Carter's had some achievements. He reduced tension between Greece and Turkey. He got the Panama Canal treaties. He set up human rights as a standard likely to be around for a long time. He scored a near-miss on the Middle East agreement and now is trying again; he's a glutton for punishment. He might even get SALT II.

Suddenly, also, a near-billion Chinese are smiling at us. Like everything else, the achievement is ambiguous. I flew with the party of Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping out to Seattle, all the time wishing it was more like the hilarious Khrushchev junket of 20 years ago. It wasn't; it was demure. Teng is a twinkly little man with a barracuda smile. Maybe we should have gotten guarantees from him on Taiwan; like everything else about Carter this diplomatic achievement is incomplete. Nevertheless, there it stands, unique. Normalization had to come; Carter did it. Subtle but powerful atmospherics accompanied it; America's mental image of China changed overnight. It is hard to hate a Communist in a cowboy hat.

Vice Chairman Teng is 74. When he left the US, he had a cold; he missed appointments in Tokyo en route home. It raised questions about the elderly communist leaders in two hemispheres. How long can they last? Teng's supporters in the Peking politburo are septuagenarians, twice purged. Can they keep their feet in the slippery regime? And Moscow, too, is dominated by old, ailing men, set in their views, paranoid about capitalist encirclement, pushing "hegemony," and facing soon a struggle for succession. Obviously we need a strong helmsman to steer through these waves.

America's views of the presidency have changed erratically. Wilson first praised congressional government, then loathed it. There was the demand for "strong" presidents after Hoover; later the relief of Eisenhower. There is a gradual drift of power to the presidency because of congressional ineptness. America reacted against excesses under Nixon. Now we are yearning for strong leadership again. Above all—successful leadership. It is a tense, inchoate time. I listened to Martin Agronsky's generally stimulating TV roundtable the other evening—of five on the panel, not one defended Carter. I looked at Herblock's cartoon last week—a series of toothy Carters in a vaudeville act, playing games with Taiwan, energy, Iran, Mexico. Adlai Stevenson calls Carter "embarrassingly weak." Henry Kissinger laments our "geopolitical decline." Twenty-seven state legislatures petition for a constitutional convention to approve an amendment requiring a balanced federal budget—to write rigidity into our system when flexibility is most needed. They don't trust Carter. What binds these things together is a yearning for a father figure to solve our problems. Daniel Yankelovich, who heads a public attitude reseach firm, finds a crisis of confidence about our institutions, "a deeply felt sense of powerlessness and disengagement among the American people." Such a feeling, he thinks, "within a context of apprehension and mistrust, could threaten our national survival."

SALT II is coming up, too. The Founders put a two-thirds requirement into Senate treaty ratification to ensure bipartisanship, but Republican elders at their Tidewater Conference decided that bipartisanship in foreign affairs is out of date. General Alexander Haig returns shortly from four years as supreme allied commander. Reportedly he may seek the presidency. Why not? Of 38 presidents, seven have been generals. It's five since Ike; time for another one. America wants somebody to take command to reconcile irreconcilables, to be strong. America wants Papa.

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Correspondence

Carter's liberalism

To the editors:

I would like to strongly dissent from Ken Bode's view that liberals should find President Carter so disappointing they ought to seek a more liberal leader ("Carter's Chosen Path," *TNR*, January 27). Let's look at the record.

Carter has consistently backed the kind of international causes that liberals have historically favored. He stoutly and effectively supported the Panama Canal Treaty. He made a superhuman effort to bring about a rapprochement between Israel and Egypt. He is trying to get a SALT agreement that is as close to liberal desires as Senate realities permit. He has given human rights a higher international priority than any president since Franklin Roosevelt. He has recognized Red China and supported majority rule in South Africa. By appointing and standing behind Andrew Young, he has given America better rapport with the less developed countries than it has had for a long time.

On the domestic front, too, Carter has taken many positions that should have pleased liberals. Last year *The New York Times* noted that Carter's new urban package represented "a departure from the white, suburban orientation of the recent Republican presidencies" since it sought to reshape "federal programs to make them more sensitive to the needs of city dwellers, especially the poor." Carter brought unemployment down below six percent, a more substantial achievement than was expected. He stood behind the bill to facilitate union organizing in firms like J.P. Stevens. He has backed ERA, fostered improvements in the food stamp program (including the elimination of the cash payment requirement) and urged cash subsidies to employers who hire the unskilled. (If CETA is being cut, it's because unemployment is well below the level at which it rested when higher appropriations were called for.) He signed Udall's strip-mining bill, which Republican presidents had opposed.

Carter proclaimed amnesty for draft evaders. He placed liberals in so many significant second echelon jobs that Republicans made ominous noises about it. His appointments to the regulatory commissions were unquestionably more pro-consumer than the Republicans they replaced. He vetoed the B-1 bomber. He presented a more liberal tax reform bill than a Republican would have offered—or than Congress would accept.

Finally, as *TNR* noted ("Belly Up to the Trough, Boys," *TNR*, October 14), ". . . one would be hard-pressed to recall . . . a president who is more determined to resist [organized interest groups] when the transcendent national interest demands it."

This is not the record of an orthodox Republican president, whatever Bode may think. It is that of a moderate liberal whose populist instincts are tailored to the political temper of his time.

Currently, Carter's inflation-fighting, deficit-cutting, defense-strengthening program is precisely what the American people want. His program is the people's program—and I can think of worse things to say of a democratic leader.

If Carter can move his party toward the center, where the nation wants to go, while the Republicans are moving toward the far right, he should be applauded rather than dumped.

Reo M. Christenson
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

Double standard

To the editors:

So Bella Abzug was just too boorish to be allowed a place in Jimmy Carter's administration, was she ("White House Watch: Booting Bella," *TNR*, January 27)? Strange, in all the stories I've heard about Bella, she's never once been accused of getting drunk in a bar, propositioning one of the male patrons, and, on his refusal, spitting her drink down his shirt. When Hamilton Jordan was so accused, John Osborne referred to his alleged victim, a young woman he could not possibly have known anything about, as a "female bar fly."

It has to be obvious that both Jimmy Carter and John Osborne believe that good manners for men are quite different than good manners for women.

Although Osborne goes on at length in his January 27 article about Bella's boorishness, he never offers any concrete examples. As nearly as I can tell from his writing, Bella's sin was that she spoke frankly and pointedly to the president of the United States about what she considers to be the shortcomings of his program. In other words she behaved toward the president as a free-born American citizen and not as a courtier. I thought the imperial presidency was supposed to be dead.

Mrs. Robert E. Cannady Jr.
Washington, DC

Peace negotiations in the Middle East

To the editors:

The New Republic severely criticizes Egypt (and the United States) for insisting upon Israeli advance agreement on issues that only can be resolved through negotiations. Certainly most of the issues that must be resolved to achieve a stable Mideast peace cannot be settled as a condition precedent to commencing negotiations. But there are *some* issues that can, should, and must be resolved in advance of negotiations.

Perhaps the issue is better stated as that there must be clear advance rejection of certain outcomes regarding the captured territories. These include permanent Israeli control over these areas, and expansion of Israeli settlements therein. It would seem to me clear that Egypt should not and cannot agree to peace with Israel without prior commitment to some sort of meaningful Palestinean control over the disputed territories. And this Israel refuses to give.

Robert L. Bard
The University of Connecticut School of Law
West Hartford, Connecticut

Shakespearean criticism

To the editors:

I want to congratulate you on publishing Balakian's essay on Shakespeare (*TNR*, January 13). This is, to my mind, one of the finest pieces I have read on Shakespeare and on Shakespearean criticism. Balakian not only makes many penetrating remarks about the nature of Shakespeare's art and genius, but she describes only too well the limitation of much of Shakespearean criticism. While she understands and points out aspects of Shakespeare's universality, she also correctly notes the differences between his time and our own. She is indeed a critic whose philosophical bent, insight, sympathy and intelligence match Shakespeare's own. I hope you will publish more of her essays.

Joan Rodman Goulianos
New York University
New York, New York

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	Years ended December 31, 1977	1976
Income		
Life premiums	$22,340,297	$16,150,742
Accident and health premiums	25,683,413	23,593,214
Investment and other income	4,799,481	4,090,525
Total income	52,823,191	43,834,481
Benefits and expenses		
Life claims and other benefits	4,126,231	3,735,055
Accident and health claims	12,430,024	11,644,002
Increase in liability for future policy benefits	12,196,239	8,711,984
Amortization of policy acquisition costs	5,183,133	4,431,061
Commissions	5,943,151	5,224,771
General expenses and insurance taxes	5,869,697	5,652,642
Dividends to policyholders	298,064	299,032
	46,046,539	39,698,547
Income before income taxes and realized investment gains (losses)	6,776,652	4,135,934
Provision for income taxes		
Current	—	—
Deferred	1,909,150	1,209,252
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	4,867,502	2,926,682
Realized investment gains (losses)	11,364	356,057
Net income	$ 4,878,866	$ 3,282,739
Earnings per share		
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	$ 2.88	$ 1.76
Realized investment gains (losses)	.01	.21
Net income	$ 2.89	$ 1.97

Assets	$116,000,000
Insurance in Force	$1,289,599,000

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Cover: Ethiopian poster for a revolutionary play about the feudal regime. Headline can be loosely translated as "The Worsening Situation." Article on page 16.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

February 24, 1979

Torturing the Truth

The Washington Post set inspiring new standards of courage, persistence and professional care with its investigative reporting during the Watergate era, but its latest "investigative" venture indicates that those standards have lapsed. Handed a mass of highly biased and questionable allegations of "systematic" Israeli torture of Arab prisoners on the West Bank, the *Post* investigated little or nothing, but repackaged the charges in a major page one story on February 7 under the headline "U.S. Reports Indicate Israeli Abuse of Palestinians." This was a case of handout journalism. Had the *Post* been so uncritical in 1972, so willing to give credence to what it was told, Watergate would forever have been nothing but a third-rate burglary.

The latest story was based almost entirely upon two secret cables last year from one Alexandra U. Johnson, recently let go from the State Department after serving as a low-level visa official at the US consulate in Jerusalem. She has interviewed 29 convicted Palestinian terrorists, who, after release from prison, applied for entry into the United States. During the standard interviews, each claimed innocence, arguing he had been tortured by the Israelis into confessing. She concluded that 15 had been imprisoned on the basis of false confessions elicited by torture. Six others, she said, had committed the offenses for which they were charged. The State Department's visa office, acting largely on Johnson's recommendations, gave visas to 26 of the Palestinians despite their Israeli police records. Three cases are still under study in Washington.

Were these 29 Palestinians "credible" sources for concluding "systematic" Israeli torture? And was Johnson, in journalistic parlance, a "reliable" source? These bottom line questions must be raised in determining the veracity of the accusations hurled against Israel.

Regarding both questions, the answer is no.

Neither the *Post* nor Johnson apparently ever gave much thought to the fact that the US does not make it a normal practice to extend visas to convicted criminals, especially those accused of terrorism. We have enough criminals of our own without importing new ones. Obviously, the 29 Palestinians had an interest in claiming they were innocent. By acknowledging guilt, they would have automatically killed any hopes of coming to the US. Thus, there was a built-in bias in Johnson's investigative sampling.

There are other reasons for taking these torture accusations with a dose of salt. Palestinian Arabs did not begin crying torture with the arrival of Johnson in Jerusalem. Such charges have been made over a long period, primarily because: (1) Politically, they serve Arab propaganda interests by damaging Israel's reputation; and (2) Palestinians who confess or demonstrate any form of cooperation with the Israelis are instantly branded as "collaborationists" by the PLO and other terrorist organizations and are marked for retribution. By claiming torture, they can save their own skins—not from the Israelis but from their own "leaders." Every Palestinian arrested by the Israelis—in fact, every person who has ever bothered to look into this issue seriously—knows this basic fact of political life in the occupied territories.

As to Johnson's reliability, the *Post*'s own editorial page commented on it the very next day: "The State Department's human rights report is based essentially on one person's interview with the self-identified victims. What has been published about Alexandra Johnson's personal life and career at the least raises questions about the degree of reliability her superiors placed on her cables—the first of their sort the State Department has received in the nearly 12 years of Israeli occupation of Arab territories. Though human rights have figured in various American-Israeli conversations for a couple of years, neither she nor other American diplomats discussed the particulars of her allegations with Jerusalem."

What the *Post* editorial was driving at was the fact that Johnson—the only US source of the torture allegations, it must be stressed—had been engaged to

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one of the 29 Palestinians. This fact was buried only at the very end of the initial news story. The engagement ended after he arrived in the United States. Where were those famous two sources of the Woodstein Watergate tradition?

Johnson, after six years in the State Department, did not win tenure as a career foreign service officer in January, and was, therefore, "separated out" of the department. This followed the recommendation of the US consul general in Jerusalem, Michael Newlin, who cited simply her inability to get along with her colleagues. We suspect that Johnson's disqualifications must have been very serious indeed, given the shortage of women and trained Arabic language personnel in the Foreign Service. Johnson, only 32, had been taught Arabic at US taxpayers' expense. For the department to get rid of her during this era of affirmative action suggests that it was certain of her inability to perform as a diplomat.

Johnson suggests that she had been fired for being anti-Israel. We find that ludicrous. When has being anti-Israel ever been a liability in the US State Department? A US diplomat who *has* demonstrated fairness on the Arab-Israeli issue, US Ambassador Samuel Lewis in Tel Aviv, is reliably reported to have strongly rejected Johnson's allegations after having the embassy investigate the matter with Israeli authorities and other sources. Neither Johnson nor anyone else at the Jerusalem consulate ever bothered to check with the Israelis. The embassy in Tel Aviv has no jurisdiction over the Jerusalem consulate because the US, ever since Israel's establishment in 1948, has not recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The consulate amounts to an embassy to the West Bank, and consulate officials, for the most part, are known for their pro-Arab sympathies. It's doubtful that Consul General Newlin, who signed Johnson's cables, would recommend she be fired for being anti-Israel. Johnson's story does not parse. Her credibility is open to doubt, and the *Post* should have doubted.

The *Post*'s own editorial went on to suggest other ways in which preparation of the news story was less than careful: "This newspaper, in writing its story based on the Johnson cables, was offered full on-the-ground cooperation by the Israeli government in examining the truth of the charges, but the actual arrangements have not yet been made."

Five days after the initial report, another article on the torture allegations appeared in the *Post*, this one by Charles B. Seib, the newspaper's internal critic. He said he had to investigate the first story because it had set off "the biggest wave of protest I had experienced in over four years as *Post* ombudsman." To his credit, Seib pointed out that the news story was "seriously flawed in several respects" and "more sensational than was warranted." One key element in the story, he said, was not reported accurately. This involved the State Department's 1979 overall human rights report on Israel and the occupied territories, which did not substantiate Johnson's cables. The *Post* had quoted only two of the eight sentences incorporated into the report's section on alleged Israeli torture in the territories. This partial quotation, Seib noted, was "confusing and misleading" and gave the impression that "the new report, the one written in the wake of the Johnson cables, differed from the 1978 report much more than it actually did."

We are told by Seib that there had been considerable resistance at the *Post* before the decision was made to go ahead with the story. Executive Editor Benjamin Bradlee apparently was the most concerned, given the clear-cut ramifications. National Editor Laurence Stern reportedly was much more keen to go with the "news." So were the two reporters assigned to the story. In the end, the decision was Bradlee's. After sitting on the story for about two weeks, the *Post* decided to publish, after Bradlee interviewed Johnson for three hours. She was said to have been convincing, as Seib wrote. "He [Bradlee] said he came out of that session and an examination of the cables themselves convinced the *Post* had to pursue the story," wrote Seib. In fact, the story was not "pursued." The *Post*, rather, let itself be used.

The US delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission, who followed up on Johnson's charges, has said that the International Red Cross has reported no evidence of "systematic torture." Red Cross officials have access to prisoners within 14 days of arrest, or earlier, "under conditions more open than anywhere else in the Middle East." Moreover, Israeli officials are not present when Red Cross representatives conduct their interviews.

As the US delegate said, the key word here is "systematic." No one is denying that there may have been "instances" of mistreatment, as noted in the State Department's own human rights report. Indeed, such instances can happen in any society, including our own. The Israelis themselves have arrested and punished some soldiers and policemen for abusing West Bank dissidents. But what Johnson charged and the *Post* lent credence to is that the Israeli government is involved in a conscious policy of mistreatment, and that officials at the highest level are covering it up. It's a great story, as they say in the news business, but it needs checking. We firmly believe that checking would prove it false, but the *Post* never bothered.

We found the last paragraph of the *Post*'s February 7 story very interesting. "When it became clear that Johnson's career in the Foreign Service was nearing an end, sources anxious to get official attention for her stories of mistreatment showed her cables to reporters from *The Sunday Times* of London. The *Times* is closed because of a labor dispute. Reporters there, anxious to publicize their material supporting their 1977 stories, brought the documents to *The Washington Post*." In 1977, *The Sunday Times* had printed a lengthy report alleging

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torture, also based only on interviews with the "self-identified victims," and also without giving the Israeli government an opportunity to respond.

The Sunday Times's "exposé" became a great *cause célèbre*, owing to the newspaper's past tradition of investigative excellence, even longer than the *Post*'s. But further investigation by journalists from Switzerland, France and elsewhere, as well as by international agencies, failed to substantiate the story. Probably anxious for confirmation, *Sunday Times* reporters provided the Johnson cables to the *Post*, which accepted at face value what amounted to a press release designed to create embarrassment for Israel and strain in American-Israeli relations.

Johnson, *The Washington Post* and *The Sunday Times* are not the only villains in this affair. The State Department must be held responsible for playing a significant role in influencing the *Post*'s coverage. The *Post* informed the Department that it had obtained the Johnson cables just as State was about to issue its annual human rights reports on Israel and 114 other countries. By law, the reports must be submitted to Congress by January 31. The assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, Patt Derian, apparently was persuaded that the cables were credible. Derian began pressing for tougher language against Israel. To bolster her arguments during the final round of bureaucratic debate, she noted that a mild report would look like a "whitewash" after the *Post* published its story. Others at State feared an angry Israeli outcry and a negative impact on the Middle East peace process. The result was a compromise.

But apparently that wasn't good enough for some senior State Department officials who often appear only too anxious to find ways of embarrassing Israel. After the *Post* story appeared, the official US reaction was surprisingly weak in defense of Israel even though the Department's final report noted that Israel "is a full-fledged parliamentary democracy with extremely high standards of justice and human rights."

Spokesman Hodding Carter III quoted only selectively from the report's section on alleged torture in the occupied territories. He did not refer to Israel's cooperation with the Red Cross, as noted in the actual section on alleged torture. The outcome was that State failed, apparently deliberately, to clear Israel's name.

And this matter goes to the heart of the American-Israeli relationship. As *The New York Times* asked in its editorial on the subject, "Is it really so hard for American officials to understand that the Camp David accords and a great deal else in the Middle East vitally depend on Israel's trust in the friendship and fairness of the United States?"

Typically, the State Department was much more generous in dealing with the human rights situation in the Arab world. Reading this year's assessment of Saudi Arabia, for example, one might confuse that country with, say, Vermont. "Saudi Arabian society is basically egalitarian and individualistic," it says. "Saudis have a finely drawn and intensely felt traditional sense of justice. . . . " The report continues: "Torture is not sanctioned or, to the best knowledge of the Department of State, practiced in Saudi Arabia. There are occasional reports of torture but none has been confirmed." We also learn from the report that the "Saudis are generally free to say whatever they wish. Indeed, citizens are invited to take their grievances to higher authorities."

Yet Freedom House, a non-governmental organization, said in its 1978 "Comparative Survey of Freedom" that Saudi Arabians are "not free." On a scale of one to seven (one for the most "free" countries, including the US, seven for the least free), Saudi Arabia was rated six in terms of both political rights and civil liberties.

Syria, rated five and six in those categories, respectively, also received kid glove treatment from the State Department. Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad was praised for the "significant improvements in human rights practices, particularly in the treatment of minorities." State especially lauded Syria's decision last year that public hangings would be carried out only "in pre-dawn hours and bodies removed immediately." They used to hang there all day. For the most part, Arab torture could not be confirmed by the State Department in the report—largely because nearly all of the Arab countries can be rated as "not free." There's very little opportunity for the United States or newspapers to conduct independent investigations in those societies. Only Israel, rated "free," allows open access throughout the country and the occupied territories. The State Department forgot to mention this material fact. So did *The Washington Post*.

Son of Egghead

Back in 1969, when he was state treasurer in Illinois, Adlai Stevenson III invited one of his father's trusted advisers to breakfast. Everett Dirksen's death had opened one of Illinois's US Senate seats, and Adlai had decided it was time for him to advance. Stevenson asked his father's counselor: "If you were to give me one piece of advice, what would it be?

"Adlai," came the response, "Don't change your name."

Now, after eight years in the Senate, Adlai III is once again thinking of "trading up," as they say in politics. For the past few weeks the heir to the Democratic party's second most famous name has engaged in confused and very public mulling over whether he should run for president in 1980. Stevenson's

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ruminations are almost a parody of his father's fabled indecision when faced with the same question, the major difference being that someone usually was urging Adlai II to run while the son's presidential visions are apparently self-acquired.

All this first came to light in a January 28 interview with St. Louis *Post Dispatch* reporters Richard Dudman and Tom Ottenad, in which Stevenson revealed openly a deep frustration that he had been expressing privately for some months. The part that grabbed most attention was his castigation of Jimmy Carter as "embarrassingly weak" and surrounded in the White House by "bush leaguers." Carter, said Stevenson, is preoccupied with the methods instead of the ends of government, a critique, he added, which is shared in Congress and even within the administration itself. Most surprising was Stevenson's suggestion that he might not seek reelection to the Senate in 1980 and run for the presidency, perhaps as a third party candidate.

Since that interview, Stevenson has amplified and adjusted his original views in a variety of press forums, including the Godfrey Sperling breakfast in Washington. His office also has passed out a series of speeches that indicate the dimensions of his frustration. One of these was in Springfield, Illinois, where Stevenson asserted that today's presidency has been "mangled" by reactions to Watergate and Vietnam.

Some 70 congressional acts designed to restrain the "imperial presidency" have crippled the president in foreign affairs, he said. In domestic policy, the executive's actions are all subject to congressional veto, and presidential leadership overall now requires the concurrence of "myriads of subcommittee chairmen."

The expansion of government has left presidential initiatives manacled to bureaucratic restraint. "Presidential policies and decisions," says Stevenson, "percolate up through inter-agency reviews and presidential review memoranda and through the technocrats in OMB until finally the computers have made their last run," and what the president finally gets reflects a "lowest common denominator of the bureaucracy." This process can't produce innovative policymaking; it produces only "options" unguided by philosophy, by history or even by the instincts of wise men in power.

Although once he was an enthusiastic participant in the Democrats' effort to open up the party system to greater citizen participation, he now believes that such reforms enfranchised single interest groups to the detriment of the general public. "The last candidate to talk sense was, like Roosevelt, a candidate of the bosses," declares Stevenson, adding a quarrelsome *ad hominem*: "The first candidates of the 'reformed' parties were Richard Nixon and George McGovern."

When he first thought all this out publicly last November, Stevenson's conclusion was that "the presidency may again require a new party to sustain it. . . . The public is dissatisfied with the existing order of things and rightly so. New parties have appeared at such times, rarely to succeed at the polls, but with lasting effects on the nation's politics. It could happen again, and perhaps it should."

Through all this, Stevenson has commanded press attention proportionate to the family name. But his remarks carry a special credibility. For one thing, one can't simply write them off to ambition or headline grabbing, as the White House is wont to do with criticism from the president's two more famous rivals, Jerry Brown and Edward Kennedy. Also, Stevenson has compiled a record in the Senate as a serious and thoughtful legislator, careful almost to the point of being plodding. His work on the international finance, science and technology and intelligence subcommittees has impressed colleagues of both parties. Part of his current despondency may be due to his experience as chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee during the grueling investigations of senators Talmadge and Brooke.

Compounding the surprise that he would consider a break with the party that twice nominated his father for the presidency is the fact that Stevenson himself routinely has been counted as a regular, mainstream Democrat. In 1968, for example, he was a Vietnam dove, but stuck by Hubert Humphrey, rather than jumping into the McCarthy or Kennedy camp. In Illinois, he sometimes criticized Mayor Richard Daley's heavy-handed, semi-corrupt techniques, but always stayed with the organization at election time. And at political appearances during the first year of the Carter administration, Stevenson regularly told even hostile labor audiences that he was one of the president's most staunch supporters in the Senate, and was proud of it.

What Stevenson is now saying about Carter's weakness and incompetence, of course, no more than echoes the current public opinion polls and pre (and now post) Camp David editorial assessments of the president. Stevenson lately has backed away from his original hints about leading a third party and is indicating he may challenge Carter in Democratic primaries. Or he might retire from the Senate or write a book. Maybe he'll just give a series of speeches to alert the country that the state of the union is not, as President Carter said, sound. Anyway, Stevenson says, if he does run for president, it should not be assumed that his objective is to win.

Adlai Stevenson is very far from the sort of presidential contender Americans are used to. Aspirants to the White House invariably seek to project images of decisiveness, whether or not they have any idea what to be decisive about. So the Stevenson proto-candidacy is refreshing—it is painfully arrived at, agonizingly conducted. Stevenson makes no pretense of charisma. He even has a strong sense of his own limitations. These are very Stevensonian characteristics. Here is a man who seems to realize that

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the issues of the world are deeply complex and that God did not give him, and him alone, magical powers to unravel them. However, at the end of the day, decisions *have* to be made. Stevenson himself acknowledges that the US needs strong leadership. It remains to be seen whether he has any ability to provide it.

John Paul and the Latin church prove forces for liberalism.

The Pope's Okay

Puebla, Mexico

The conclusion of the third Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM) here has provided significant encouragement for liberal clerics throughout the developing world who look to the Roman Catholic church as a force against political repression and human degradation. Progressives approached the conference with considerable apprehension, fearing that the 356 assembled bishops and other church leaders would take this opportunity to censure those who have promoted innovations in the role and structure of the church. But instead, to the surprise of many, the delegates produced a final report that not only does not seek to curb the innovations of "liberation theology," but in some cases actually encourages its most controversial departures.

As could be expected, the bulk of the document is couched either in ecclesiastical jargon or general appeal for the "mobilization of all men of good will." But activist priests will find in several of the sections sharp condemnations of the "indiscriminate repression" and "permanent violation of the dignity of the human person" which are "typical of military regimes." Also included are specific calls for the implementation of labor legislation, better treatment of domestic servants, and curbs on the role of "multinational conglomerates which often look out for their own interests at the expense of the good of the nation which has allowed them to come in."

A predictable chorus outside the CELAM conclave labeled activist segments of the church "communist" or "Marxist." These indiscriminate charges lumped together moderate prelates who go no further than questioning the legitimacy of dictatorships with radical priests and lay workers who openly embrace Marxism. The final document clearly repudiates the use of any Marxist methods in the church—the only clear-cut defeat for liberals. "Marxist strategies have sacrificed many Christian virtues" and tend to increase the "spiral of violence" by turning to methods "that employ force as their fundamental means," says the document. But at the same time, the bishops condemned "the free market economy which . . . has made the distance between the rich and the poor even greater by placing capital before work, and economic interests before social interests." Other targets of the delegates, who represented 22 Latin nations, included "individualist materialism," "cold technocracy," and "consumerism, with its uncontrolled ambition to have more."

Beyond its comments on ideology and political activism, the document addressed some of the dramatic innovations that have shaped the Latin American church since the last Bishops' Conference, held in 1968 at Medellin, Colombia. The most profound of these has been the emergence of the so-called "base community," in which Catholics live together in a communal fashion to put their faith into daily practice. Many of these communities, which exist in both cities and remote areas, have become politically militant and have been viewed as challenges to conservative governments. Their promoters feared that they would be easy targets for traditionalist prelates at Puebla. But due largely to the power of the bishops from Brazil, where as many as 50,000 such communities function as the church's base among the poor, the CELAM report not only did not attack the base communities, but praised them as "one of the motives for joy and hope in the church. . . . They have become focal points of evangelization and motors of liberation and development."

It is only now, after the release of the final report, that the impact of Pope John Paul II's visit to Puebla is beginning to be understood. Some early reports, including an entirely inaccurate editorial in *The New York Times* which was passed around and ridiculed by reporters at Puebla, suggested that his speech inaugurating the CELAM conference was a flat rejection of "liberation theology" and indeed, of any temporal role for the church. But in fact, the pope's message turned out to be an important card in the hands of moderates and liberals at Puebla. The pope outlined only general goals for the church, urging bishops to continue searching for "justice" and "the rights of every person," while leaving it to the Latin prelates themselves to decide how to apply these goals. "Respect man!" he exhorted his listeners in a passage reformers interpreted as a message to dictators and torturers, of whom there is no shortage on the continent. "He is the image of God!"

As the conference drew to a close, liberals were praising John Paul for his "shrewd" handling of a delicate mission. They suggested that he went as far as he possibly could toward endorsing their position without alienating traditionalist bishops and the conservative Roman curia. Many pointed to his speech in Santo Domingo, by far the most stirring condemnation of social injustice he made on his six-day visit to the New World, as proof that he recognizes the reality of life in Latin America. Another incident that encourages

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liberals was John Paul's reported insistence on rewriting a speech prepared for his delivery in Oaxaca to address more directly the needs of the poor.

Conservatives among the delegates to the CELAM conference arrived in Puebla carefully prepared to manage the deliberations and produce a document that would condemn what John Paul called the "erroneous interpretation" of the Medellin document of 1968. But as the conference progressed, they found their plans upset by the phalanx of liberals and moderates whose strength and success—though far from absolute—surprised even some of their own supporters.

The traditionalists in the church have been alarmed by many developments in the Latin church since Medellin. They view the "base communities" as a form of "parallel majesterium," or attempt to escape from the control of the hierarchy. The very concept of confronting governments is abhorrent to many of them, who consider it a degradation of the ecclesiastical mission. The correct way to improve the human condition, according to their view, is to uplift the souls of individuals, not to become "excessively preoccupied with temporal matters," as one of their number put it.

The symbol of this view is Bishop Alfonso Lopez Trujillo of Colombia, who won the key post of CELAM general secretary at a 1972 meeting now known as "the coup of Sucre," after the Bolivian city in which it took place. An accomplished church politician, Lopez Trujillo centralized the CELAM organization in Bogota and immediately began work on the first draft of the Puebla report, which was issued more than a year ago. That early draft caused howls of protest because of its harshly conservative tone, and Lopez Trujillo was forced to retract it in favor of a "working document" that was somewhat more conciliatory. But by maneuvering to stack the Puebla conference with his presumed allies, he still seemed in control, and this led many observers outside Latin America to pessimistic predictions of what would happen in Puebla.

But the tone in Puebla changed almost day by day, and by the time the final document was voted upon, the harried Lopez Trujillo looked less and less like the coldly efficient Rasputin his opponents consider him to be. One reason was the full emergence of his nominal superior, CELAM president Aloisio Lorscheider of Brazil, as a progressive leader. Because of his humble nature, Lorscheider had remained in the background during much of the preparatory work, but he began forcefully to assert his authority after arriving in Puebla. The Brazilian hierarchy is the most liberal on the continent, and the presence of Lorscheider and such other Brazilian liberals as Bishop Helder Camara of Recife and Paulo Evaristo Arns of São Paulo, all of them profoundly impressive men, obviously had a considerable effect on the conferees.

Many of the bishops participating in the conference are not profound thinkers. Essentially administrators, they do not spend great amounts of time meditating on social reality or the role of the church in confronting it. So a conference like this one was a rare opportunity for them to reflect on these matters, a kind of "large-scale adult education program," in the words of Harvard theologian Harvey Cox. To these men, the presence of such commanding figures as the Brazilians and Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was a revelation. Their accounts of brutality and repression and the courage and innovation with which they have confronted the "so sad reality" of Latin America created an emotional tie which conservatives were unable to stem.

While the bishops were meeting inside the well-guarded Palofoxiano Seminary on the outskirts of Puebla, liberals from across the continent were holding press conferences and distributing literature at the overflowing downtown hotels to journalists, sympathetic churchmen, and anyone else who would listen. They ranged from critics of the CIA and multinational corporations to mothers of disappeared people in Argentina and El Salvador and advocates of a greater role for women in the church. Their presence and the waves of printed material they distributed—much of which was "smuggled" into the CELAM conference by liberal bishops—undoubtedly had an effect on the deliberations, if only because it forced the Catholic leaders to recognize the intense scrutiny under which they were working. Attacks by conservative Mexican newspapers on some liberal bishops also served to rally uncommitted moderates to the liberal position.

It has been assumed from the beginning of the preparations for this conference that the final document would have a strong impact. And so it will, but not in the manner many observers would have predicted before the conference opened. Initially, the meeting was billed as a sort of referendum on Medellin at which bishops would decide whether to continue ecclesiastical innovation, activism and experimentation, or abandon it in favor of a retreat to the pulpit. But as liberals like the Brazilians explained their programs to their foreign colleagues, and as bishops like El Salvador's Romero began to impress others with the force of the repression they have endured, it became clear that no step backward from Medellin was possible. The church in Latin America has become very decentralized since the Medellin meeting of 1968, and priests and lay religious workers would not respond to such a backward step even if it was recommended by their bishops. Rather than ignore this reality, the bishops widely recognized that their real task should be to suggest ways to apply the Medellin doctrines rather than try to curb them.

The report has also been eagerly awaited outside Latin America. Catholics in other parts of the third world will use it as a guide for their own work, which in some cases will inevitably produce friction with repressive governments. Many bishops in the United

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States, especially those whose jurisdictions include many poor people, have indicated a desire to try to apply some of the Latin church principles and methods to their own work. And leaders of other faiths are anxious to see what role the Catholic church takes in a region where it commands the allegiance of a majority of the people and hence has a great political potential. Bishops who have met with Hindu leaders in India and Buddhist figures in Thailand, for example, report that they are most interested in how CELAM directs the work of a "majority church" so they may consider it as a guide for their own followers.

Finally, the report may also spell hard times for conservatives like Lopez Trujillo in their efforts to curb the social activism of Catholic bishops, priests and other religious workers. Lopez Trujillo will not be eligible for another term as CELAM's general secretary, and after his replacement is selected in March, CELAM will likely fall back under the control of moderates and liberals. That development, coupled with the ammunition given to liberals by the Puebla documents, could spell intensifying pressure from the church on some Latin dictatorships in countries where progressive Catholic leaders are determined not to sit idly by while their countrymen live in what they call "situations of sin."

Stephen Kinzer

Stephen Kinzer contributes frequent reports on Latin America to *TNR*.

Another lesson of Iran:
oil embargoes don't matter.

The Oil Crisis that Isn't

Anyone who isn't confused about whether there is an Iranian oil crisis has not been listening to the US government. President Carter and Treasury Secretary Blumenthal say no crisis is yet at hand. Energy Secretary James Schlesinger says not only that conservation is necessary, but that government fuel allocations, Sunday gas station closings and even rationing are on the horizon. Senator Jackson, who often echoes Schlesinger's sentiments, is predicting dollar-a-gallon gasoline. Who's right? I say the president is closer than Schlesinger, whose dramatic statements are in danger of misleading Congress and panicking the public. The cutoff of Iran's oil exports has set the Chicken Little crew of assorted academic, journalistic and government doomsday prophets to work, smacking their lips and wringing their hands. Maybe this is it, they say. Maybe God, or rather Allah, is finally punishing us for our sinful, wasteful ways.

But there is no crisis, nor need there be one in the future, unless we make one ourselves. And we surely will do just that if we resort to such controls as mandatory allocations and rationing. These would be designed to maintain a system of price controls in the US while world prices of crude oil rise. This price gap is a sure prescription for "shortages." We should have learned from the Arab oil embargo of 1973-74 that intervention with the market for oil and oil products causes all kinds of fearful dislocations, real shortages, economic harm, and many inconveniences. We should remember that Holland and Israel, which were nominally embargoed by the Arabs, never had lines at gas stations, but they had no price controls on oil either.

Let us review some facts about the present oil cutback. Iranian exports have dropped from about five million barrels per day (mbd) to zero for several weeks now. It could be months before substantial exports are resumed. Even when they are, some experts guess that exports will remain below three to four mbd—not just because Khomeini wants to save oil for future generations, but because the wells won't produce more without skilled Western technicians. In the meantime, however, other countries, principally Saudi Arabia, have increased their production to take advantage of the shortfall; they sell their additional oil at much higher prices on the spot market—and at great profit. Taking into account this additional production, the net shortfall for the world at present seems to be about two mbd, which neatly matches the reported drawdown of oil stocks, reported at two mbd. The current "shortage" should therefore be close to zero.

To gain some perspective on these numbers, consider that total world production, (and consumption), is about 60 mbd. Normal OPEC production is over 30 mbd, and US consumption is nearly 20 mbd. The world shortfall of two mbd is only some three percent of production. If everyone would reduce oil consumption to 97 percent of last year's, then there should be no problem.

If the Iranian cutoffs persists for a very long time, something like the following will happen. The market will balance itself, but at a price approximately 10 percent above what it would have been otherwise. World consumption will decrease by perhaps one to two percent and some additional production will come in. A 10 percent increase in the price of oil is nothing to sneeze at. It amounts to about $1.40 per barrel (of 42 gallons). But it is not a calamity either, because it only comes to about three cents per gallon of gas when the price increase is passed through on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In the US, where only half of the oil is imported, the effective increase will be less than three cents. It will be even less if we figure out how to use our great

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current surplus of natural gas to substitute for oil in various energy applications, such as heating and electricity generation.

If the facts are so unthreatening, you might ask, then why are some oil companies already reporting shortages and promising reduced allocations in the future? Why is Shell rationing gasoline? Why do some companies complain that they may have to close down their refineries for lack of oil? There is an answer for everything: these companies, large or small, want something—usually relief from regulations or often just more money. Note that while Standard Oil of California reports shortages, Standard Oil of Ohio reports that it has "oil coming out of its ears" (*The Wall Street Journal*, February 2). While Exxon warns of problems ahead, some oil production is shut in in California, and much more oil could be gotten out of Alaska by installing more pumps along the pipeline.

Shell Oil is rationing unleaded premium gasoline, but that has nothing to do with the Iranian cutback. It has a lot to do with the fact that gasoline prices have been regulated in such a way that Shell has not been able to build the necessary refinery capacity. Small oil refineries now are pinched for oil and clamoring for government allocations. But their problem is that they had been buying oil on the spot market because they made more money that way. Now that spot prices have gone up above contract prices, they want government help. It's a familiar story, just like that of the farmers demonstrating at the Department of Agriculture.

It certainly is strange that so many oil companies warn of cutbacks in deliveries of 10 to 20 percent when the world shortfall is only three percent. Perhaps they find it more profitable to sell some oil on the spot market in countries where there are no price controls; certainly they could lose money by importing higher-cost spot oil into the United States. The Gulf Oil Company imports from Iran but has not announced any cutbacks. "I find it difficult to conceive of physical shortages or rationing," says Warren B. David, Gulf's chief economist. He says that the international oil companies "are still flexible enough to transfer oil around," and he thinks the world could do without Iran's oil for the next few years, if Arab producers maintain their output.

But what if Saudi Arabia stops its extra production and Iran remains shut in? That would be serious, but not a calamity. The price would rise some more—about another 10 percent. But what if all of OPEC were to stop its production? Now, that *would* be the equivalent of the sky falling—calamitous, but not very likely.

Fortunately, we have some independent indicators of how serious the world situation actually is. Countries that drew huge quantities of their oil from Iran—South Africa (90 percent), Japan (20 percent) and Israel (60 percent)—have not flown into a panic. They are all buying oil elsewhere, even if it costs slightly more, and even if the cost must be passed on to consumers. Significantly, the Israelis have not raised the matter of US oil guarantees under the 1975 Sinai agreement whereby they gave back captured oil wells to Egypt. There are other indicators of a non-crisis: the strategic petroleum reserve on the US gulf coast is not being tapped by the Department of Energy, nor does DOE have plans to do so. The oil-sharing arrangement of the International Energy Agency has not been activated as yet, though one shouldn't exclude this possibility, if only because bureaucracies the world over want to prove their worth by showing activity.

As is normally the case, the consumer countries are sharing the world shortfall in production through the usual market mechanism of prices, using private and national oil companies and many oil brokers. Clearly, South Africa and Japan are bidding oil away from other consumers by offering a little more money on the spot market. Spot prices are reported to be as much as 25 percent above long-term contract prices. This is not a cause for worry. During the 1973-74 embargo, spot prices ranged up to 800 percent above the contract prices. Of course, if spot prices for the incremental oil stay up high, they will put pressure on contract prices and gradually force them up—but by a lot less.

The US buys only five percent of its oil from Iran. In addition, we have a glut of natural gas. And we have huge coal supplies. Why, then, does the Department of Energy want to conjure up a crisis when there isn't one? Is it yet more self-justification by the bureaucracy? Or is Schlesinger, the CIA and Pentagon veteran, intrigued by international crises? Do the regulators want more attention, more money and more political power?

All of these motivations may play a part, but I suspect that this crisis is being conjured up to create a political climate in which it is easier to push through policies which the bureaucracy deems to be important. Ever since Jimmy Carter uttered his famous "MEOW" (Moral Equivalent of War) in April 1977, there has been agitation for a National Energy Plan—really any kind of plan, just as long as it could be said that the government got an energy plan out of Congress. The plan itself keeps changing, with most of the original items abandoned. After insisting for two years on a price regulation scheme for oil that is even more onerous than what we have now, DOE now reportedly wants to deregulate oil, perhaps adding a large severance tax to siphon off "windfall profits." This is not a bad idea even though some people, including the editors of *The Washington Post*, hold the droll view that controls cannot be lifted when prices are rising. Anyway, Senator Jackson has promised us one-dollar gasoline *plus* mandatory allocations; so there is really nothing to lose by freeing prices. Another major DOE goal, also worthy, is to persuade Congress to repeal the law forbidding export of Alaskan oil. This would make way for an eventual doubling of Alaskan production, and full production in California. If Alaskan oil could be

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exported, it could be swapped for Mexican or other oil to be shipped to the East Coast—with everyone gaining in the transaction. Still other DOE objectives, involving considerable emotion, have to do with slowing down environmental regulations on coal burning, and delaying the phase-out of lead additives in gasoline in order to conserve oil. All these goals, some good, some less so, may be achievable in a crisis atmosphere.

So the Iranian cutback does have some uses. The DOE has been a little slow to catch on to the fact that the cutback in Iran was potentially larger than the 1973 Arab embargo. But now it has found that a "crisis" pays, and is pursuing it with great vigor. The oil companies can also be relied upon to blame shortcomings on the Iranian "crisis," and OPEC, of course, has already used the cut in Iranian production as a pretext for announcing a price increase of 14½ percent for 1979. (Because of expected inflation, the real price rise is expected to be only about five percent.)

There is another use for the Iranian oil cutoff—a political one which may have major significance for us. An important lesson can be drawn from the present Iranian experience, namely, that a future oil embargo is not likely to hurt the US, or other Western nations for that matter. Right now we have an embargo in every respect but name. During the height of the Arab oil embargo, the shortfall in oil production was only two mbd, which is about the present situation. The only essential difference—and an important psychological one—is that nobody refers to the Iranian cutoff as an embargo. Therefore it has made far less impact on the world except to raise oil prices slightly.

The sooner we can demonstrate to everyone that an oil embargo would be largely ineffective, the sooner the world can get on with its business and pursue more rational policies. The Iranian oil cutoff provides such a demonstration, and it should dispel, once and for all, the fear of an embargo, which has so strongly dominated the thinking of governments and of the public over the last five years. This fear now turns out to be largely unwarranted, though it encourages both political and economic blackmail.

The thoughtful observer will raise the following question: if the Iranian oil shortfall is equivalent to or greater than the Arab embargo of 1973-74, then why doesn't the world price of oil triple or quadruple? Basically, in 1973 the world oil market switched from a reasonably competitive market to a market controlled by a monopoly. But once one has achieved a monopoly, there is no way of doing it again. Even monopolies must obey the laws of supply and demand. In the last few days Kuwait has predicted that the world price would indeed triple—and by April 1979. But it won't. Any price rise will depress world demand for oil and at the same time stimulate more production, producing a glut and holding prices down. Even if Saudi Arabia ceased *all* its production, about eight mbd, the consequence would only be a world price rise of about 50 percent.

Why did the Arab oil embargo produce shortages in the US, as evidenced by long lines at gasoline stations, and won't the current Iranian shortfall have the same effect? The question is complicated but, briefly stated, the horrendous side effects of the embargo were due primarily to the panicky actions of the US government—well-intended but wrongly applied. The price controls that existed at the time (and still exist, but in a different form), for a while made it uneconomic to import oil. The government also ordered refineries to produce more heating oil and less gasoline. Finally, it allocated gasoline administratively, giving surpluses to some regions and deficits to others, rather than letting the market allocate gasoline by price. When the government eventually allowed prices to rise, it did so on the first of every month; not surprisingly, distributors and gas stations would "run out" toward the end of the month, holding their supplies for the coming price increase. It is also a documented fact that US oil stocks were greater at the end of the Arab embargo, in April 1974, than they were during the height of the embargo. Stocks were also considerably higher during the embargo than they were a year earlier. So much for shortages! Yet despite this dismal record, the regulators want us to take another chance on mandatory allocations and other kinds of controls.

To cover a final aspect of the Iranian "crisis," what should one make of the Iranian government's announcement that it will not sell oil to Israel? This is mostly internal propaganda designed to appease Islamic extremists, and has little practical significance. Oil is quite a fungible substance, as the Arabs learned during the 1973 embargo. Once Iranian oil is put back on the world market, it will displace some other oil, which will then be "swapped out" by oil traders to supply Israel. Even a permanent cut in Iranian production could not harm any particular country, though it would raise world oil prices. One thing is sure: a cut will reduce Iran's oil income and cause severe problems for the Khomeini government.

The Iranian oil experience may be salutary if it convinces the public that the much-vaunted "oil weapon" is in fact an empty threat. We now have an embargo, in effect, but no huge price jump, no real shortages, no disruption of the economy—even in countries which bought most of their oil from Iran. The analogy to the emperor's new clothes is quite appropriate. Perhaps that is why the Arabs have never "unsheathed" their "oil weapon" since 1974. Their scabbard really is empty, but until we believe it, they will continue to behave as though it contains a dagger.

S. Fred Singer

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A brutal place with a canny, nationalist leader to match.

There's Hope for Ethiopia

by Louis Rapoport

A frightening, oppressive atmosphere pervades Addis Ababa, a capital city that is wired with tension and fear. During the months of the "Red Terror" last year, the national radio introduced its frequent execution announcements with the playing of a piercing war song that made the blood run cold. The shrill anthem was an echo of the regime's new drive: "Revolutionary Ethiopia or Death!"

Visitors to socialist Ethiopia are struck by the nightmare quality of Addis, which can be a horrifying place in the best of times. The "new flower" of the plain, a city that didn't exist 100 years ago, swarms with badgering crowds, brown dust, smoke and flies. In the teeming marketplace, strangers are descended upon by the hungry horde: clinging bootblacks and hustling hangers-on, a weird gallery of whores, young toughs and grotesque beggars swathed in filthy burlap rags—the riffraff "lumpen" that was among those mobilized by the military regime into *kebeles*, associations of urban dwellers. Many of these cells—there are 29,000 of them in Ethiopia's urban centers—were transformed into vigilante groups during the Red Terror, when most of the leftist political foes of the regime were crushed.

High school and college students—"immature sons of the feudal classes"—had been dealt with six months before the Red Terror, which climaxed in February 1978, four years after the revolution began with strikes and rebellion in the armed forces. The Dergue, the mysterious committee of 40 military men—it had numbered 120 at the beginning of the revolution—announced that enemies of the state would face "the sword of the Ethiopian Revolution." And in a two-month period, police and army squads murdered 5000 high school and university students and imprisoned 30,000 others—in a country whose entire student population was 36,000 10 years ago. Twelve-year-old children were among those immersed in hot oil, sexually tortured or flung out of windows and left to die in the road, according to Amnesty International.

One teenager who had been arrested along with every other young person in his quarter of the city was one of the few who managed to escape. He told me of a former army officer who lived in the house next door with his wife and six sons. All six were arrested and summarily executed over the May Day weekend of 1977. Thousands of parents in Addis got their children's clothes back, blackened and full of bullet holes. If they wanted to claim the body, they had to pay 50 Ethiopian dollars for each bullet hole. If the son's body had 10 bullet holes it would cost the father about three times the per capita annual income in Ethiopia to get it back.

The survivors of the student massacre joined the radical leftist Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP), whose membership is dominated by Marxist intellectuals. Many of them had studied in the United States or in Europe during the turbulent 1960s. Their prospects in Ethiopia were not very good. The greatest problem in Africa, according to President Biyogo of Equatorial Guinea, is "the so-called intellectual." His solution, in the spirit of the Congo civil war, was to slaughter the entire intelligentsia in his country. More or less the same course was followed in Ethiopia, where the students, labor leaders and intellectuals had been in the forefront of the revolution that deposed Haile Selassie, the First Autocrat of All Ethiopia, in September 1974. If these elements had taken power, they undoubtedly would have been as ruthless as the military regime has turned out to be. They called the Dergue, which is now led by 37-year-old Mengistu Haile-Mariam, "Bonapartist" and demanded that it turn over power to a "peoples government," led by a civilian vanguard party. By 1976, the intellectual-military split became the major feature in Ethiopian politics, along with the question of nationalities.

Last year, the EPRP unleashed a wave of assassinations in Addis, killing around 300 Dergue members and supporters. And Mengistu countered this "White Terror" with the officially sanctioned Red Terror, the systematic liquidation of most of the country's educated citizens. As elsewhere, among the revolution's first victims were the revolutionaries. "The enemies of our revolution are not liberal with us, why should we be liberal with them?" a Dergue spokesman said. As the Red Terror spread into the countryside, it bolstered the power of the Dergue. Rampant fear engendered renewed vows of allegiance to the central government.

Mengistu himself admits that there has been "some" spilling of blood, but he says that terror is used only in reaction to the terrorist tactics of the "counter-revolutionaries." It was the "anarchists, saboteurs and CIA agents" who were creating the chaos in the cities, he said. Mengistu dismissed Western claims of "abuse" of human rights, pointing out that "these same countries did not only shamelessly keep silent in the face of the immense violation of human rights which

Louis Rapoport, a reporter for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, is completing a book about the Falashas of Ethiopia.

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The Falashas: A Black Holocaust Looms

Among the hundreds of minorities in Ethiopia is a small tribe called the Beta-Israel, or Falashas. They are related to the Agaw tribe, the indigenous people of Ethiopia, who have long been subjugated by the Amhara. But they are distinct from their Christian, Moslem and animist countrymen. The 28,000 remaining Falashas are Jews, and they have been identified by the chief rabbis of Israel as the Lost Tribe of Dan, which disappeared from history 2700 years ago.

The government of Israel officially recognized the tribe as Jews in 1975, and has been urging Ethiopia to allow some of the Falashas to join their families in Israel, where 300 black African Jews live. In recent months, Falasha spokesmen have claimed that the tribe was on the verge of a "black holocaust." And in January, an Israeli government official announced that 2000 Beta-Israel have been killed or wounded by rebels who oppose the central Ethiopian government, to which the Falashas remain loyal. About 7000 other Falashas have been routed from their homes, and these refugees reportedly are starving on the outskirts of Gondar, the former capital of Ethiopia.

The Falashas live in strikingly beautiful country in northwest Ethiopia, north of Lake Tana and the Nile headwaters. The tribe once numbered over a million and for centuries maintained its independence in a mountain kingdom, engaging in wars that reached the ears of European scholars and the Cabbalists of Safad. But they were finally defeated by the Amhara emperors 350 years ago and tens of thousands were sold into slavery and dispersed. Those remaining were reduced to a pariah status and became objects of continual persecution because of their crafts, especially metalworking and potting. Among the superstitious tribes of the northwest, ironworking is directly associated with the evil eye, and the Beta-Israel are still accused of being vampire hyenas and satanic magicians.

The Falashas (an Amhara pejorative for "exile" or "stranger") were forbidden to own land under the feudal regime, and up until the overthrow of Haile Selassie, they were paying 75 percent of their crop to landlords, who could expel them at a whim, or simply have them killed. In 1973, just before the revolution, landlords hired *shiftas* (bandits) to punish a Falasha village in the subprovince of Lasta. Thirty villagers were murdered. But that was the situation of most of the rural population of Ethiopia until the "Land to the tiller" revolution and the nationalization of all land in 1975.

The Falashas praise the Dergue and Mengistu for the government's nationalities policy, which grants them rights they couldn't have dreamed of under the feudal regime of Haile Selassie. But they are still regarded as pariahs by some of their neighbors. And in the last three years, they have become a target of the rebel armies that terrorize the Gondar and Tigre regions. Their loyalty to the central government has much enraged the insurgents.

Although many Falashas served in the national militia, the tribe has only a few World War I era rifles for self-defense. They are extremely vulnerable, since government soldiers are engaged in far away Eritrea and in the Ogaden. The leftist EPRP has vowed to wipe out the entire tribe because the Falashas refused to join their insurrection.

And the right-wing EDU, the ragged army led by Haile Selassie's relatives, also has been waging war against the Falashas. Recently, they took over a Beta-Israel settlement. The metalsmiths and potters were carried away in chains—and sold in a slave trade that still thrives. The remaining village women were raped and mutilated—hands and breasts cut off—and the men were castrated.

In Israel, a desperate Falasha community demonstrated in front of the Knesset and the prime minister's office last month, asking help for their families. Appeals went out to Jewish organizations in England and the United States. Tribal spokesmen begged to be heard. Just a few years after the "rediscovery" of the Lost Tribe had occurred, the last of the Falashas were being liquidated.

It is a fate shared with many other small tribes in Africa, like the Pygmies, whose destruction is just about complete. The Falashas have little hope of catching the attention of a world that has long since grown inured to whole peoples being wiped out, let alone a small isolated tribe.

L.P.

were prevalent under the defunct feudal regime, but also actively encouraged and supported them." When President Carter aimed his notoriously selective human rights gun at Ethiopia and cut off US military aid, Mengistu went to Moscow for the arms he needed to preserve Ethiopia against her enemies, and the Soviets embraced him.

Washington has totally misread the situation in the Horn of Africa in recent years. US policy alienated the Ethiopians and helped Somalia and the Eritrean secessionists, who are backed by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and Syria. Saudi money was used to woo Somalia away from the Russians, who gave up crucial Indian Ocean bases when they dramatically switched support to Ethiopia. Eritrea is even more strategic than Somalia, with a coastline stretching 600 miles along the Red Sea, just a few hundred miles from the richest oil deposits in the world.

The huge influx of Cuban and Soviet forces on the African end of Zbigniew Brzezinski's "arc of crisis" caught the White House off guard. US policymakers ignored the implications of the changing alliances in the Horn, then continued to underestimate Ethiopia's vital importance to Africa and to the Middle East. Israel and the Arab countries, on the other hand, perceived the critical importance of events in Ethiopia. Israel's interests in Ethiopia stem primarily from the fear that if the Eritreans gain independence, Arab nations will

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have total control of the Red Sea. So Israel has helped to arm Ethiopia and to maintain its US Phantom jets. The Saudis fear Moscow-inspired coups in the area and one reason they've financed Egypt's armed forces is because they see Anwar Sadat as leading the resistance to communist infiltration in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea.

In recent months, intelligence analysts and NATO generals have been saying that the Cuban and Soviet presence in Ethiopia is the most important strategic development facing the Western Alliance. Under the North Atlantic Treaty, the Horn is within NATO's potential theater of operations, and there have been rumblings that intervention may become a necessity. NATO military sources told *The New York Times* that the Russian aim is to threaten the world's major oil routes, the jugular vein of the NATO countries and Japan, and that the Soviets have been pressing Ethiopia to grant the Russian navy the right to base a fleet at Eritrea's two Red Sea ports of Massawa and Assab, controlling the entrance to the sea leading to the Suez Canal and Israel.

The Ethiopians maintain that they have had no help from "fraternal countries" in the Eritrean war—only in the Somali war. The embassy in Washington denies that the Soviets have made any request for bases, and an Ethiopian official said: "Ethiopia is opposed to having any foreign bases because of our policy of non-alignment." Ethiopians are fiercely independent and it is probable that they will resist a permanent foreign presence and will reject any request for major military bases. The Cubans and Russians have helped Ethiopia to preserve its unity. But their welcome may already be wearing out. Cubans are seen everywhere. Their help is greatly appreciated, but "a lot of them walk the streets like masters," says one recent visitor to Addis. It is similar to what happened to the Russians in Somalia, Sudan and Egypt—eventually, they had to stay in walled compounds, removed from the native population.

There are other serious differences between Ethiopia and her allies. At a huge rally in Addis last fall, Mengistu promised his countrymen that the coalition of five Marxist-Leninist groups represented in the Dergue—the "Union of Five"—would soon be transformed into a political party. The Dergue's Soviet allies have been pressing Mengistu to do this and sharp disputes over the composition of this party have continued. The Dergue has insisted that "the gains of the revolution must be consolidated" before the military can relinquish power to a civilian party's "peoples government."

Recently, the Ethiopian Communist party, Meison, whose members had dominated the circle of radical intellectuals advising Mengistu, intensified demands for the formation of a political party. And the Russians, Cubans and East Europeans stepped up the pressure on Mengistu to include the Meison in the proposed party. Meison had been instrumental in bringing together the Dergue and the communist countries. But Mengistu resisted. A Meison leader and five of his gunmen were hanged in public—a time-honored Ethiopian custom—allegedly for murdering 30 innocent persons. By the time of the Somali invasion last summer, the Meison had severed its last ties to Mengistu and the Dergue and gone underground, joining the remnant of the EPRP in the leftist opposition.

The formation of a new workers party is a "pressing revolutionary obligation," in the words of Mengistu. But he has succeeded in putting it off, enraging his communist allies. This struggle could take a dramatic turn in the coming months. Epic changes are occurring all along the "arc of crisis" and it would be no surprise if this current political conflict eventually led to an Ethiopian break with the Russians. The State Department may be ordered to accommodate the Ethiopians once again.

Washington's concern for human rights should not get in the way of an overture to the Dergue. For Mengistu, as bloody as he may be, has performed an herculean feat. A few months ago, Ethiopia was disintegrating. The country was being torn apart by manifold conflicts: the Somali war and the Eritrean war, tribal insurrections and a maelstrom of violent religious and ideological battles. This patchwork empire of hundreds of tribes and nationalities, a country marked by dramatic geographical and cultural differences, was falling apart. The traditional separatist tendencies of the provincial peoples had accelerated with the revolution: there were the ELF and EPLF in Eritrea, the TPLF in Tigre, the WSLF among Ogaden's Somalis, Oromo insurrections in Bale and Sidamo, an Afar rebellion in Wollo, and the EDU—a monarchist-led army—had control of part of Gondar province. Warfare of some kind was being waged in at least 11 of Ethiopia's 14 provinces.

Under the feudal regime there had been many peasant uprisings, which were related to the land question—land was owned by the emperor, the nobles and the church until 1974—but there was never a unified peasant movement because of the wide differences in religion, nationality and culture. Mengistu, like the emperors before him—especially Theodore, the 19th-century "king of kings"—is committed to unity as his government's fundamental principle: "Above all, the unity of Ethiopia will be the sacred faith of our people," he has said. And nationalism, not ideology, has been the most effective rallying point in the revolution.

In the four years since Haile Selassie's overthrow, the problem of how much autonomy should be granted to the nationalities has become the central question dividing the ruling political groups represented in the Dergue. Some favor regional self-rule, while others desire a system of independent but federated provinces.

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Even the radicals outside the ruling circles have supported unity, although they've adopted a Leninist approach to the nationalities question, which includes the right to secession. And they accepted the Eritrean movement. This went too far for the Dergue.

Ethiopia's struggle to hold on to Eritrea has found wide support among African states, all of whom have their own tribal and nationality problems. Even the Sudan, which harbors hundreds of thousands of Eritrean refugees, no longer calls for Eritrean independence, but for more autonomy.

Last September, Ethiopia marked the fourth anniversary of the revolution with a massive military parade, featuring "Stalin organs" (multiple-rocket launchers) and Fidel Castro, and a procession by tens of thousands of youths in khaki uniforms with members of the various mass revolutionary organizations. A crowd of 250,000 spent the day in Revolution Square, which was bedecked with huge icons of Marx and Lenin, and applauded the "open theater" troupe that portrayed the overnight emergence of Ethiopia from a feudal society to a communist society. But the highlight of the celebration was a march by delegations from the tribes of Ethiopia, a country which has been characterized as the "Museum of Peoples." They wore traditional costumes, danced, sang and chanted praise for their leaders, who have helped to restore their dignity. A government official told a reporter: "If each of these nationalities were to follow the example of the Eritrean secessionists, we would have destroyed our cultural heritage." And Mengistu frequently mentions that Eritrea itself is not an homogenous area, but one that has its own oppressed minorities—he cites the Kunama, Afars and the Saho—who support the central government. The war in Eritrea is being fought so that "the Eritreans can join the rest of the country in socialist construction," he told an interviewer. "The real problem is the dream of reactionary Arab regimes to dismember Ethiopia," to control the Red Sea. And he blames Egypt and Saudi Arabia for the Eritreans' rejection of his National Democratic Revolutionary plan, which gives the nationalities their "inalienable right to participate in the determination of their social, economic, cultural and political future within the framework of the concept of full regional autonomy."

Mengistu Haile-Mariam is a powerful, shrewd and fierce figure, the son of an Amhara night watchman and his Oromo wife. And he is the first ruler since 1270 to challenge the ancient domination of the Semitic Amhara and Tigre peoples—the Abyssinians—over the hundreds of other peoples of Ethiopia. The blacker, Cushitic tribes of the South and other regions are coming to the fore in Ethiopia; and the Oromo, whose number may be as high as 15,000,000, or half the country's population, have emerged from a slave status under the Amhara. "The nationalities are all equal now, no one is allowed to dominate," says an Ethiopian Embassy official in Washington.

Many Dergue members do not belong to the northern Christian peoples, and the Amharas' total domination of Ethiopian culture, society and politics is over—it ended with the demise of the last Lion of Judah. The Oromo had rebelled against their masters for years, and when the revolution came, their insurrection was rekindled—it was the time for many nationalities and religious groups to demand more freedom. Almost half the country is Moslem, but under the feudal regime, Christianity was the state religion and the Moslems were among other groups barred from owning land or holding state office. The military government recognized Islam. And the Dergue allowed Oromo-language broadcasts for the first time, in keeping with Mengistu's approach to the nationalities question.

The problems in Ethiopia seem never-ending—it is a place of epic horror, of "hunger, ignorance and disease bestowing their bounty all over the country," in the words of novelist Danachew Worku; "Ethiopia is God's way of putting an end to things."

But with the help of 17,000 to 20,000 Cuban troops, thousands of Soviet advisers and almost two billion dollars in military and economic aid, Mengistu in the last year has dealt devastating blows to the Eritrean rebels and the Somalis, steamrolled political dissidents and ruthlessly consolidated his own power. He blames his countrymen for the "frightening" economic situation which makes Ethiopia the poorest country in the world. But in general the people have been far better off than they were under the feudal regime. They have more food, shelter and clothing in a famine-prone, war-ravaged country. The minorities have more rights. And the government's attempts at land reform have won it the allegiance of a large segment of the population.

Ethiopia has survived as a political entity for over 3000 years. It has often fallen apart after the demise of a ruler, remaining in fragments—sometimes for generations—until a strong successor came along. Apparently, Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu fulfills that role. Ethiopia has always been a secret society to the outside world. But that too may be changing. Haile Selassie's downfall was speeded by the great famine in Wollo and Tigre. The emperor's government, with the collusion of Western relief organizations and embassies, hid from the world the fact that hundreds of thousands of people were starving to death and only called for help after 200,000 people had died. The revolutionary regime, which is currently confronting another massive famine in the central and northern regions, has appealed to Western organizations for help and has been open about the extent of the problem.

An Ethiopian official in Washington said recently that about two million people are affected by the drought in six provinces, including Wollo and Tigre, which were devasted in the last famine. American help could save thousands of lives and would be regarded as

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a gesture of reconciliation: "If the aid is given on purely humanitarian grounds, with no strings attached, it would be welcome," the official said. Washington, in the wake of the developments in Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and Israel, will have to reevaluate State Department policy in the Horn and move toward rapprochement with Ethiopia in order to check Soviet ambitions in this volatile and vital region.

The problem isn't socialism or unions, but investment.

Britain Works. . .But Not Enough

by Henry Fairlie

Good Thoughts in Bad Times *was the title of a once well-known book of homilies. At one of the worst times the country has known for many years, we might turn away from pickets, railway strikes and food supplies, to talk about the arts.*

—*The Spectator,* January 20, 1979

The voice is unmistakable: the voice of England in the face of calamity. Britain might be reeling under strike after strike, but it will turn to "talk about the arts." In the same issue of *The Spectator,* its editor, Alexander Chancellor, wrote amiably: "Meanwhile, life does not seem to me abnormal." And one of the best journalists in Britain, Peter Jenkins of the *Guardian,* said in a no-nonsense way: "These difficulties do not yet constitute a national crisis. We are nowhere near a civil breakdown." The war-time song was right: "There'll always be an England." No wonder that E.M. Forster wrote of the English in 1920, when he noticed with some approval that there is a certain "slowness" in their character: "They are splendid at emergencies." They may huff and puff a little, but they do not blow their house down. What really tells the story is not the outbreak of strikes, but how contained they have been.

The strikes have been mainly in the public service industries and therefore—in the short term, at least—have caused more misery than real injury. There is something lurid about a strike of gravediggers, with the accompanying threat that the embalmed and unburied corpses, stored in a warehouse, may have to be taken out to sea and sunk. But the sensational stories of old-age pensioners dying of famine, or children denied essential hospital care, or other children battered by their parents because the social workers are on strike, or typhoid spreading where fresh water is unavailable from the tap—all have proved to be fantasies of the more melodramatic press. Misery, yes. Injury, no. There are even more hard-headed tests to apply. Somewhat to the surprise of even the most optimistic, the pound has not fallen in value, and there has been no panic on the stock exchange. The upper lips in the City, someone observed, have stayed stiff as a board.

In public at least, James Callaghan, the prime minister, has his arms folded, in the true Baldwin manner. (Baldwin would probably have gone one step farther, and left to take the waters at Aix-les-Bains.) In the short term, he is entitled to talk of a "spasm" in the trade union movement, just as Denis Healey, his chancellor of the exchequer, has aroused the ire of some by talking of the industrial unrest as a "hiccup." The rest of the world can only wonder, like Robert Lekachman a few months ago, writing as an Anglophile, at the "weird nature of British politics." What is Perfidious Albion up to now? There must be some devilish scheming behind all the apparent insouciance. Let us "talk about the arts," indeed! All that the rest of the world is given is the quip of Quentin Crisp, one of today's iconoclasts of the British theater: "The English think incompetence is the same thing as sincerity." How artfully and effortlessly that distracts!

An increasing number of would-be Gibbons in America are all too eager to dissect the corpse. They call up the image (clearly to make their own political hay) of some dying beast which, on its very death bed, feeds upon itself in a last orgy of lust and socialism.

—Stephen Blank, in *International Organization,* 1977

But beyond the short term, the violent breakdown of the wage restraint of the past few years, which was a genuine story of success, is a cause for apprehension, and the corpse *will be* dissected once more. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the rest of the world—the Americans, perhaps, most of all—should understand at least what are *not* the reasons for Britain's difficulties. What is called "Britain's sickness" is too

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drawing of James Callaghan by Vint Lawrence

often taken as a model of dire results that must follow from the welfare state, or high taxation, or some ill-defined disorder known as "socialism," which conservative commentators make the theme of their elegant but irrelevant elegies. Britain has never introduced anything that deserves the name of "socialism." What is taken by Amerian conservatives to be "socialism" is a few Boy Scout exercises in helping the aged across a road. As Stephen Blank added, "The real story is better, and, perhaps, sadder."

Even as the Conservative opposition now reaches for every stick to beat the Labour government, none of its responsible leaders or even its intellectual mentors has suggested that the welfare state has anything to do with the laggardness of Britain's performance. One may speak even more strongly. The welfare state is the very foundation of the continuation of the civility of British life, of the fact that throughout its decline in the past 30 years the legitimacy of the political system has not been called into question. But the welfare state equals high taxation, goes the litany of the conservatives. One can always calculate the tax burden in many ways, according to one's liking, but it is simply untrue that Britain is more highly taxed than equivalent nations in Europe, such as Germany and France, and it would be hard to prove that its tax structure is any more of a disincentive to skill and creativity. Those who flee the high taxes, some writers in the van, do not go to France or Germany, but to Monaco or Malta. The "brain drain" was never a matter primarily of pecuniary motives.

It is equally untrue that Britain is the most strike-ridden country among the industrialized nations of the West. This was confirmed recently by a massive survey of the years from 1967 to 1976 conducted by the International Labor Organization. Britain's record in this period—788 working days lost for each 1000 employees—was much better than that of the United States—1050 days lost—and startlingly better than that of Canada—1900 days lost—which had the worst record of the 18 countries that were listed. It is similarly untrue that the trade union leadership has been "socialist" or "communist"—the premise on which the myth of "Anglocommunism" has been built. Those who are given to such nonsense might contemplate the retirement of Hugh Scanlon—once a militant union leader—to the genteel and respected benches of the House of Lords. There sits this rabid "Communist," the liege of his sovereign!

The fundamental cause of Britain's troubles is a persistent low productivity, which can partly be blamed on the unions, but which has its real origins in the policies of both management and government which, in the words of Terry Beckett, the chairman of the Ford Motor Company in Britain, threaten to turn the country into an "industrial museum." The problem is "senescent British industry," in the words of Lord Kaldor, once the economic adviser to Harold Wilson. It is what James Callaghan has called "our long-standing uncompetitiveness." The internal causes of this stagnation as summarized by Stephen Blank—"inefficiently organized industries, dated capital structures in many industries, low levels of replacement of capital goods, widespread restrictive practices, an outmoded system of industrial relations, and trade union and management practices that inhibit industrial modernization and economic expansion"—can be traced to "socialism" or anything akin to it only by minds that are not only perverse but deliberately so. Even the sheer bloodymindedness of some of the unions cannot be traced to any such ideological motives.

The representative and "most hated" union leader in today's unrest—Moss Evans of the immense Transport and General Workers Union—is not inspired by "socialist" or "communist" or even "radical" purposes. He is a newcomer to his post, trying to get control of his rank-and-file, and may in fact be accused of the opposite fault, that he is not ideological at all. He does not really care who is in power, or in what political direction they wish to go. He is interested in leading his unruly members from behind. His authority is very much less than that of his mighty predecessors, such as Ernest Bevin or Arthur Deakin, and this points to one of the genuine causes of Britain's difficulties. Both the individual unions and the trade union movement as a whole are much more fragmented than in the past. The Trades Union Congress—more or less the equivalent of the AFL-CIO—has lost much of its authority over the

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individual unions; and at the same time the individual unions—as in the excessive power of the shop stewards—have seen their authority trickle to the shop floor. And what those shop stewards feed on is again not any ideology, which at least might unite, but the same bloodymindedness of fragmented pockets of workers, whose grouses are very local.

We now take for granted that other countries do things better than we do.

—Lord Carrington, Conservative leader in the House of Lords

The root cause of Britain's difficulties is its persistent low productivity, of which in turn the root cause has been a persistent low investment over the years. For that low investment, government and management must be held responsible, since they do the investing. (Or rather, do not do it.) I am one of those who believes that the problem must be seen in historical perspective. Britain was the first nation to industrialize. For a hundred years after the 1770s, its industry outstripped the world. One of the reasons why it could bear the loss of the First British Empire, in the American war of independence, was that it was poised to create the Second British Empire on its manufactures and its trade. Defeated in America, it could turn almost at once to defeat Napolean in a protracted war, because it was already a lively industrial power. That was what Napoleon meant when he sneered that the English were a nation of shopkeepers. Indeed they were, and their shopkeeping beat him. But this industrial predominance lasted only a century. By the 1870s the other nations, including America, were not only catching up, but were doing so with new industrial plant, while Britain's was already old. Every historian is agreed that by the 1870s, even as Britain's power seemed to be at its height, the basis of that power was already undermined. I do not agree with Stephen Blank, powerful though his argument is at all levels, that British industry showed a real surge of vitality in the 1930s and the 1940s, and the story of the coal industry alone supports me.

The collapse of Britain's position as an industrial power was concealed by its massive investments in the five continents of the world. But it had to sell these to fight the First World War, and then especially and almost to the last penny to fight Hitler. Winston Churchill might say that he did not become His Majesty's first minister to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire, but he in fact had dissolved the reality of it by having to sell Britain's estate overseas. At least the shattered industries of Europe were built anew after 1945—an uninvited chance to modernize again—but Britain's ancient industrial plant still stood with the exception of a few scars from Hitler's bombers. (It was amazing how little of Britain's industrial plant was in fact touched by the bombing, a blessing while the war lasted but a terrible disadvantage once it was over.) From being a great manufacturing nation, Britain had already turned to becoming a great financial nation after the 1870s, but after 1945 not only was its financial position much weaker than was at once recognized, as was demonstrated by the wretched attempts to bolster the sterling area, but it had almost none of the wherewithal to recapture its old manufacturing position.

Unless it wanted to. Ah! there's the rub! Here, Stephen Blank is absolutely correct in his paper on Britain's condition. Although I disagree with its general theme, it is packed with insights that have to be met. Blank emphasizes the part played by deliberate government choices over the years. Successive governments of all political colors have pursued domestic and foreign policies without allowing for even the foreseeable consequences. (Wise governments also make allowances for the unforeseeable ones.) That is irrefutable, but it does not get us very far. The governments of other countries have made equal mistakes, but then have been able to erase them and start anew. The British governing class is not noticeably more stupid or demented than any other. Indeed, it was once celebrated all over the world for its talent in government. It is certainly true that after 1945 it was for too long deluded into trying to maintain Britain's traditional role in the world—the Commonwealth and the sterling system were particular traps—but this persistent miscalculation of both the country's real resources and where its true interests lay does not really explain the giddiness of the decline. There has been some factor at work common to the whole people. The problem is not really that put by Lord Carrington—that the British now think that others do things better than they do—but that they have convinced themselves that they do not want to do those things anyhow. If we wished, they argue, we would and could, but we don't.

The Englishman's deceit is generally unconscious.

—E.M. Forster, 1920

In fact it is self-deceit. "Hypocrisy is the prime charge that is always brought against us," he went on, but the hypocrisy is not intended to delude others, it is self-delusion. Shortly after the Conservative government was defeated in 1964, I went to see Reginald Maudling, who had been its highly gifted chancellor of the exchequer. Now that he was out of office, could he really say what was wrong with Britain? "What can you do with a people," he answered at once, "who do not want much more than they already have?" There is a cutting edge of truth in the remark but, before we come to it, one must also say that is has all the marks of what E.M. Forster meant by hypocrisy. Hypocrisy of both the British and Maudling. The working and middle classes in Britain would like to raise their standards of living and, if they pretend that they do not, pretending not least to themselves, is it not because they simply do not

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expect to be able to raise them? One must not use the rigidity of the class system in Britain as an over-simple explanation of its troubles, but the fact remains that the majority of British people expect to live and die in the stations into which they were born.

This attitude has in the past contributed to the stability of the society, but *only so long as* a general, even if slight, growth of the nation's economy was able to blunt the edge of the most immediate expectations. What Britain now confronts is such a diminished expectation of any sustained growth of the economy that people's own expectations for themselves have been drastically sharpened. With a pie that no longer grows in size, everyone is after the last slice—perhaps one should say, the last crumb. This is especially true of the working class, of the militant rank-and-file whom the union leaders are now unable to hold in check. The workers have a genuine grievance. Especially since 1974, when they agreed to restrain their wage claims, they have in fact acquiesced in a reduction of their real wages; they have accepted levels of unemployment which were thought to be banished after 1945; they have seen the social services decline and their payments for them increase; they have even agreed that the profits of their employers must be allowed to increase, even while their own real earnings have been held back; and they have not pressed politically for the great redistribution of wealth which the Labour party promised to them in return. And what have they gotten for this restraint? Nothing. Prices have not been held down in the same manner as their wages. But above all there has been not the slightest evidence of the general growth in the economy from which they were supposed to benefit.

There is indeed a profound lesson to be learned from Britain just now. But it needs to be learned most by those in America who advocate a "no growth" economy. Diminished expectations of economic growth will yield only civil disorder. The British workers in the public services whose strikes have caused most affront, since they are in the work of caring for others, are at the bottom of the antheap, and the lack of any general growth in the economy has forcibly reminded them that they are likely to stay there. Contrary to the mythology that surrounds all discussions of Britain, the union leaders have by and large wrestled hard and long with their members. But there had to be an explosion, and the explosion has now come. It cannot be said too often or too strongly that the Social Contract between the unions and government, on which so much has rested in the past few years, was broken first by the policies of both government and management. This is not to exonerate the unions or their members from all blame. It is not to deny that they fight to maintain some very silly restrictive practices, and strike over what at least seem to be some very trivial issues. But if you are at the bottom of the antheap, and the antheap itself then begins to contract and squeeze you farther and farther down to the bottom, then some bloodymindedness is to be expected. The flashes of violence in British society in recent years have not yet destroyed its civility—that "slowness" of the English character still tells—but one senses behind them all the bitter frustration of people who can see no way out of their condition. No way up. No way, even, along.

> *In a way, the English are more civlized than we are. After the Second World War, they decided to enjoy themselves more than the rest of us. They are less efficient, but maybe they are happier.*
>
> —Claude-Pierre Brossolette, formerly chief aide to Valéry Giscard d-Estaing

Maybe! And maybe there is something to this view, a strain in the British character that is indeed valuable. But it is when this is carried over into yet another exhibition of the national gift for hypocrisy that it is offensive. An American publisher once told me that he was amazed during one of his visits to Britain that British publishers wanted to maintain their standard of living in relation to that of other professions in Britain, but were not in the least interested in raising their standard of living to the level of American or German publishers. He conceded that there might be something admirable in such an attitude, but in the end he rejected it as a false way of ordering one's own priorities. I think he was right. It is all very well to "drop out" in this way if one is near the top of the antheap, and makes sure that one will stay there, but it is not an attitude with much appeal to those at the bottom, and of course it is no way of contributing one's skills to the general prosperity of the country and of its less fortunate citizens. This is simply a continuation in the middle class of the old upper-class disdain of anyone who is "in trade."

It is a picture of a very decent and cultivated class that emerges from this hypocrisy. And, yes, snobbery. Edmund Stillman, the founder and director of the Hudson Research Europe Ltd., recently wrote that, "in everything having to do with the intellectual life Britain remains in the very first rank of nations"; that "in no sense is British technology inferior to any"; that "postwar Britain's cultural life is probably more vigorous than that of the 1920s and 1930s, which certainly cannot be said for France or West Germany"; but that Britain expends its mental energy and intellectual talents on "scholarship and the arts," whereas France and Germany since 1945 have directed them into "the economic process itself." It all sounds, and is, very engaging. But carried to the lengths of hypocrisy, it can result only in national decline. It has nothing to do with "socialism" or "communism." The warning is addressed rather to those elements in the American middle class today who selfishly wish to pursue the good life at the expense of others.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on film

Conspicuous Presumption

Robert Altman is becoming a public embarrassment. After *3 Women* and *A Wedding*, which were declarations of presumptuous bankruptcy, he comes up with *Quintet* (20th Century-Fox), which doesn't even have the energy to declare itself bankrupt. Altman ranges: his pictures are very different from one another in subject. He is technically accomplished. His aims, or implications of them, are lofty. And these three matters have given him a lot of mileage, have bamboozled a lot of commentators. As a realized artist, in any serious sense, he has never been more than flashy, and the flash is now fading fast.

I don't believe in retrospective predestination. I don't think that a later bad work reduces the stature of an earlier one. I don't now downgrade *M*A*S*H* or *The Long Goodbye*, the only two Altmans I've really liked, or *Nashville*, which at least had some Reddiwip aerated richness. But around these few were the many Altmans I didn't like: *Brewster McCloud, McCabe and Mrs. Miller, Images, Thieves Like Us, California Split, Buffalo Bill and the Indians.* He has almost always been spurious, puny, a fast-talking merchant of aesthetic glitz, with two exceptions when his facile feverish satire managed to strike home. Still, the worst of his past—which is to say, the majority of his films—and the vacuous insolence of his last three pictures come pretty close to a fixing of his fate. The future may judge our age culturally by its high estimates of Joan Didion and Robert Altman. The Robert Altman nonsense is already coming undone.

Quintet was written by a team of three, including Altman, from an original story by a team of three, including Altman, and is paralyzingly stupid: stupefied with a mumbling, guttural pretentiousness. It's laid in the future when, apparently, the sun has withdrawn and the earth is left in permanent winter. The story, which I'm certainly not going to detail, is set in a snowbound, virtually deserted city, with scattered survivors in the icy ruin and with bands of scavenging dogs. (The dogs are all of one breed—seemingly the only breed that could survive the cold.) The survivors gamble, a game called Quintet that Altman says he invented; this is a credit he can have. Like the game in *Last Year in Marienbad*, Quintet is supposed to have symbolic significance, which didn't escape me because I never wanted to grasp it. At the beginning Paul Newman arrives in the city, out of snowy wastes, with a pregnant companion. She is killed. Many are killed, in the course of the film. At the end, Newman leaves, heading north. I think it means that, if he heads north despite the snow everywhere, there is hope.

There's plenty of violence—no record is broken but at least Altman isn't going to be elbowed out of the violence market. Among other delights you can see: a) a knife twisted in the chest of a man already dying; b) a three-shot in which the center figure, Nina van Pallandt, sits dead with a sort of arrow through her face while the two flanking figures converse; c) Bibi Andersson getting her throat cut on camera.

Jean Boffety, who photographed *Thieves Like Us*, does discriminating color work against the dominating white: his palette never really gets bright yet it never gets dull. The opening shot, a pan down from a white sky to a white earth, is much like a key shot in Troell's *Here's Your Life*, and the return to white at the end continues Altman's Bergman-borrowings, but Boffety handles it all well. Leon Ericksen's design for the broken and frozen city has more of the feeling of a good theater design than film design, though of course it's much more extensive than a stage design would be. But its intent is less to represent realistically than to distill imaginatively. And the cast! Newman, Andersson, Vittorio Gassman (once a leading actor in Visconti's theater), Fernando Rey (whose first international success was in *Viridiana* and who has hardly been out of sight since).

Why any of these people accepted this script is something of a mystery—with Newman, it's a complete mystery because he could figuratively do anything he wanted to. No, it's not mystery I feel about Newman, it's disgust. It's 18 months since he made his last film, *Slap Shot*, a hockey pic that didn't ask much more of him than to be around a lot and bustle. A year before that, he did Altman's pathetic *Buffalo Bill*; the year before that, a rotten thriller called *The Drowning Pool*, the year before that, *The Towering Inferno*, which needs no comment. So since 1973, when he did *The Sting*, which was at least entertaining, Newman has made only five films, all of which were abysmal in themselves and demanded little of his abilities. Surely it's some sort of cultural symptom when one of our very best actors—in the prime of life, at the peak of his powers—does nothing in the theater for 15 years and in the last six years makes only five varyingly poor films. What a disgrace.

Sean Connery is not comparable with Paul Newman except in one way.

Films Worth Seeing

Autumn Sonata. Still incomparably the best film around. Ingrid Bergman (mother), Liv Ullmann (daughter), and Ingmar Bergman (master).

The Deer Hunter. Male bonding at home and in Vietnam. Serious though unfocused. Some good direction, much excellent acting.

The French Connection. Lino Ventura quietly dominates this police-and-politics thriller set in Rouen. Enjoyable.

Max Havelaar. Dutch film about Dutch rule in Indonesia 125 years ago. Cardboard characters, conventional story, but doesn't drag because it's well made and performed.

SK

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Connery is not even a particularly good actor and I've never found him personally appealing, but he too is a pain in the rump. After he had made his millions in James Bond pictures (*after*, of course), he denounced those pictures as drivel and said he was getting out of them in order to do something better. Well, folks, having then made *Ransom*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and *The Next Man*, here is Connery in *The Great Train Robbery* (UA).

Connery always unconvinced me as the supposedly suave and brilliant James Bond, a role that needed Cary Grant but which fortunately came along too late for Grant or else he might have wasted *his* time. Now, as the worldly mastermind of a criminal gang in the London of 1855, Connery is just as incredible as in Bond—more so, because the character is not even as well grounded as Bond and the ellipses are not filled by the personality of the actor. (The way Lino Ventura, for instance, fills in slim roles.) So when this gang gets in jams and Connery thinks of a way out, my disbelief is not suspended. Nor could I believe that, with his prole accent, Connery was passing himself off as a gent in mid-Victorian London.

Donald Sutherland's humorous ease and apparent enjoyment of his career success flow from him and again make him pleasant. Lesley-Anne Down, who was pretty as Georgina in *Upstairs, Downstairs*, is pretty here, too, though used a bit vulgarly by her director.

He is Michael Crichton, director and co-author of the abominable *Coma*, who has at least stopped urinating on his former profession, medicine. The origin of the film is a novel by Crichton, which I haven't read, about the first robbery from a moving train. Whatever the book was, it comes out in Crichton's screenplay as just one more Big Caper flick, this time in fancy dress—*The Brink's Job* (another bore) spun across the ocean and back 120 years. Crichton's direction has not one touch of credible elegance or of originality. Every strophe of suspense brings to mind numberless antecedents, although not every caper flick would be so dumb as to call its hero a mastermind, then have him wear his coat when he climbs to the top of a moving train so that he has to throw it away, have him not know that the train would pass under low bridges or not know that he would be covered with soot.

Millions must have been spent on this picture, whose exteriors were shot in lovely Ireland. This fact hurts. One subjective index of the success of an entertainment film is whether I get irritated about the money it cost. If I'm really being entertained, I don't think about it. But all I could think of during Crichton's picture was that better filmmakers, young and not so young, could have done a lot with this budget.

Add in Altman's budget for *Quintet*, and you might have launched a Golden Age in American film.

William Youngren on classical records

A few years ago I had occasion to reread most of the *Iliad*, and as I reached the end of the great interview between Priam and Achilles in Book XXIV I found myself wondering why I ever did anything else in the world but read the *Iliad*. A recent day spent listening to the late Beethoven piano sonatas produced a similar reaction—equally absurd, equally temporary, but equally justified by the greatness of the object. Last month in these pages I mentioned Maurizio Pollini's splendid new version of the *Hammerklavier*, Op. 106 (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 869); since then I have obtained his recent versions of Opp. 101 and 111 (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 870) and his slightly earlier ones of Opp. 109 and 110 (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 645), and have had a chance to compare them with Schnabel's classic pre-war performances, still available on Seraphim, as well as with Ashkenazy's versions of Opp. 110 and 111 (London 6843). (Ashkenazy's *Hammerklavier*, which I also mentioned last month, is on London 6563, and his Opp. 101 and 109, which I could not locate my copy of, are on London 7029. Pollini's recordings of the five sonatas are also conveniently available in a three-record set, Deutsche Grammophon 2709 072.)

As in the *Hammerklavier*, I was struck in the other late sonatas by the beautiful strictness and elegant austerity of Pollini's playing—a strictness and austerity, I should say at once, that never inhibit him from rising to a great expressive moment but rather make his response to such moments always perfectly adequate and satisfying, never in excess. Listening to him, and thinking of the discipline involved in such an achievement, I was reminded of Eliot's phrase in *Little Gidding*: "A condition of complete simplicity / (Costing not less than everything)." Until now Ashkenazy has been the only pianist whose versions of the five late sonatas have demanded serious comparison to Schnabel's; but now there is Pollini, and I think he is even better than Ashkenazy, who sometimes is excessive—in the two concluding fugues of Op. 110, for example, which he plays ponderously but to which Pollini gives a lucidity and steadiness that make his performance the equal of Schnabel's. And in the first movement of Op. 111, where Ashkenazy is deliberate, brooding and massive, Pollini's greater steadiness makes him able to articulate more effectively the primordial, bowels-of-the-earth force that is at the core of the music—though Ashkenazy's performance is very fine in its own way.

Sometimes of course it's right to play Beethoven, and especially late Beethoven, in a way that at first seems excessive: sometimes the music itself is excessive and even eccentric. The second movement of Op. 101, the least known of the late sonatas but a very great work, is a march, heroic but filled with violent contrasts of tempo and dynamics that give to the heroism an air of desperation and even madness. Schnabel heightens these contrasts, and compresses and telescopes phrases, in a way that at first sounds excessive but that in fact brings out the eccentricity that is in the music. Pollini, on the other hand, smooths the movement out: the heroism is served straight, the performance is admirably powerful, but one can't help feeling that something is missing—and this is true as well of Pollini's performance of the same sonata's finale. To miss the eccentricity of late Beethoven is to miss part of the man, and I would even suggest that

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Schnabel's crazily fast tempo for the first movement of the *Hammerklavier*—a tempo based, however, on Beethoven's own metronome marking—is perhaps the right one after all, and that recent pianists, even ones as fine as Ashkenazy and Pollini, who have made the movement manageable by slowing it down, have thereby sacrificed some of its essential craziness.

My one serious quarrel with Pollini's performances concerns the opening movement of Op. 109, which he plays crisply, rhetorically and urgently. The music calls rather for the warmth, charm and improvisatory ease that Schnabel gives to it and that enable him to achieve the sharp contrast, no doubt intended by Beethoven but somewhat obscured by Pollini, with the intense and dramatic movement that follows. A less important complaint is that near the end of the last variation in the finale of Op. 109, where the right hand breaks into 32nd notes over an insistent trill in the left, and then the trill rises to the right hand as the left takes over the 32nds, Pollini is a shade deliberate, not sufficiently *ecstatico*—to use a word that Schnabel at this point added to his edition of the sonata. Thus Pollini misses a little of the heartbreaking simplicity of the return, at the very end, to the movement's original theme. But these are minor flaws—if indeed they are flaws at all. Pollini's performances of these great works are to be treasured as we have treasured Schnabel's.

As an admirer of the harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt, I was very disappointed by his recent set of Bach's six Brandenburg Concertos (ABC Seon 67020), done with his own Leonhardt Consort and, of course, played on original instruments. In No. 1, I was immediately struck by the unvarying clunkiness of the rhythm and by the rather nasty sounds emitted by the instruments: horns bleated, strings scraped, oboes brayed—the whole business chugged along like a Model T. The oboe and the violino piccolo were played with a harshness and insensitivity that killed the beautiful slow movement, and the phrasing of the noble minuet was coarsely exaggerated. No. 2 was slightly better, but the solo trumpet was shaky and caterwauling in the first movement (though quite adequate in the third) and the very touching slow movement was taken at a clip that prevented the fascinating dissonances from gradually unfolding to reveal the meaning of the music. The other four concertos were better, and best of all was the opening movement of No. 5, where the scoring is lighter than usual and where Leonhardt, who has a prominent solo part and dazzling cadenza rather than the usual unobtrusive continuo, was constantly in evidence. (Only after I had listened to all six did I notice that Leonhardt did not play on Nos. 1 and 2, though he presumably did conduct them.) But the phrasing throughout the set is heavy and lugubrious, the instruments mainly a trial, and there is never enough wit or poignancy or joyousness. All of which led me to think about the question of authenticity in Bach performance.

Of course we want to hear original instruments (or good modern copies) played in a style as close as possible to the style of Bach's time. But they must be played beautifully. We know from 17th- and 18th-century "tutors" for the oboe that it was capable of both great sweetness and great power, yet how often does a baroque oboe in a modern performance sound really sweet or really powerful? The 19th-century improvements in orchestral instruments—the addition of valves to the brass, the adoption of the Heckel fingering system for the bassoon and the Boehm system for the rest of the winds, the various changes in the shape and size and stringing of the stringed instruments—came about in order to make things easier for players (and thereby to extend the range of realistic possibilities open to composers). The obvious conclusion, not often faced by advocates of authenticity in baroque performance, is that the earlier instruments will, by and large, be harder to play well than their modern counterparts. Louis Speyer, the Boston Symphony's English horn from 1918 to 1964, said recently that he gave up serious oboe-playing early in his career because he realized he could not play both the oboe and the English horn well—and this of two modern instruments that come equipped with all the modern conveniences! What must the difficulties be with a baroque instrument? The reconstruction and idiomatic playing of old instruments is still a young art—as recently as 1952 as knowledgeable a musician as Vaughan Williams could refer contemptuously to "those gross bagpipes which in Bach's time stood for an oboe." But until the art is perfected, I will take my Brandenburgs from conductors like Britten (London 2225) or Marriner (Philips 670045), leading first-rate players of modern instruments, or even in the quite unauthentic versions by Casals (1965 and 1951) or Busch (1935), which still stand up surprisingly well. The Brandenburg Concertos are directly derived from dance-music, and no performance of them, no matter how respectable the pedigrees of the instruments involved, can claim to be authentic if it lacks rhythmic life or tonal beauty.

One of the few groups of modern works often said to rank with the Brandenburgs or the late Beethoven sonatas is the group of six string quartets composed by Bartok between 1907 and 1939. I have never agreed with this judgment, nor do I now, having just listened to all six quartets, for the first time in perhaps 25 years, in the Guarneri Quartet's new recording (RCA ARL3-2412). The much-praised "vitality" of the later works still seems often to be mere hectoring and swaggering—relieved, of course, by frequent interludes of portentous meditation. There are fine things in the later works: the powerful cello recitative in the third movement of No. 4 and its witty pizzicato fourth movement, the jazzy "Alla bulgarese" scherzo of No. 5. But there is also a poverty of invention that often leads to a deadening sameness. And listening to the beautiful, rather effete No. 1, I wondered if perhaps Bartok, like Pound, was at heart a turn-of-the-century aesthete who, at least on some occasions, transformed himself into a bully-boy by sheer force of will—and at great cost to his art. For me the best Bartok works are the Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta (1936) and the Concerto for Orchestra (1943), in which, perhaps because he had at his disposal the full range of orchestral color, Bartok did not feel impelled to strive for effects, to flex his muscles, to posture and preen. But to those who love the quartets I can unreservedly recommend the Guarneri performances as the best I have ever heard: sensitive, sumptuous, beautifully shaped, and well (though somewhat too closely) recorded.

Coming:

Paul Fussell on
World War II
in Fact and Fiction.

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Reconsideration

The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind by Julian Jaynes

For a long time I have felt that I had a root growing somewhere in my body, with splinters and many sharp forks. That stubborn root tipped into my psyche, my bones and my guts, and sundered me in some horrible way. I could write, draw straight lines, balance a checkbook, cross the street, but I still couldn't think of myself as that "Jerome" who could squeeze all of his identity into a single name. Why not *six* Jeromes, instead of one? All with different lips and eyes. Mumbling, making faces, warring with each other, and pulling me, whoever I was, anywhere *they* had to go. They could be scatological or nice, lazy or endowed with a terrific capacity for work, these six Jeromes.

It was a crazy idea, and I learned to shut up about it, until I read Julian Jaynes, a 55-year-old straggler and prophet, an untenured researcher in Princeton's psychology department. Jaynes is an outlaw in his field, because he refuses to leave metaphysics alone.

His book, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Houghton Mifflin, 1976), is a primer for our own mad century that goes beyond Freud or Marx to explain those disorders of the mind and "heart" that cannot be found in the riddle of politics or the interpretation of dreams.

Jaynes believes that earlier cultures thought in a much different way than we do. The Mesopotamians, the Egyptians, and the Incas had no abstract sense of justice: they worked, slept and obeyed the god-voices inside their heads. ". . . [A]t one time human nature was split in two, an executive part called a god, and a follower part called a man. Neither part was conscious." Jaynes calls this preconscious split the bicameral mind.

"There were no private ambitions, no private grudges, no private frustrations, no private anything, since bicameral men had no internal 'space' in which to be private, and no analog 'I' to be private with." In those "unsubjective" times, "every kingdom was in essence a theocracy and every man the slave of voices heard whenever novel situations occurred."

Bicameral man could hear the "voice" of his god-king, and labor in behalf of that voice. He trusted this hallucinatory voice, since "he could not 'see' what to do by himself."

Such kingdoms broke down and disappeared because the bicameral mind had essential weaknesses. It froze during periods of great stress. " . . . [I]n social chaos the gods could not tell you what to do."

The history of our own civilization is the movement from the bicameral mind to "the subjective conscious mind," that was able to deal with change and stress, because it did not need those disappearing gods to reassure it and stroke it to rest. "Auditory hallucination" was replaced by man's ability to scribble down and codify his past. His new sense of history told him what to do when voices were "no longer heard in hallucination."

I can swallow *all* of this, though it may seem idiotic to some of you. Bicameral minds? Voices roaring in the head? Finally, it doesn't matter whether Jaynes is right or wrong about the internal breakdown of Egypt "in the last century of the third millennium B.C."

How will we ever know?

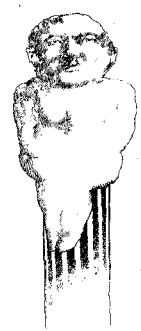
Jaynes's sorcery isn't rampant and unschooled. He is a shaman-scientist who can argue about each spindle and specific hemisphere of the brain. He talks of that "double brain" in all of us. The left cerebral hemisphere (in right-handed people) controls the right side of the body and contains the areas of speech. The "nondominant" right hemisphere has little to do with speech. Under certain conditions the two hemispheres "are able to act almost as independent persons," or as if there were "two persons in one head."

If we, the normal, the unsick, have a kind of internal "jealousy" going on between the hemispheres of our brains, a swordplay in the head, a hurly-burly of voices and silences, doesn't it suggest a sundering in all of us, a displacement, a mad, energetic root that doesn't allow us to be one, individual self?

Am I twisting Jaynes around for my own exaggerated purpose? Who am I to call other people crazy? Yet I do. It seems to me that there is a very real split in our psyches, and a "schizophrenia" in the way we live. We mumble "peace, peace," and make war. We stroke, then we bite, and stroke again. Our loving is more akin to hatred than anything else. We preen in front of mirrors, and then look at ourselves in disgust. No wonder we have a proliferation of "demon" films and "demon" books. Most of us, at one time or another, feel possessed. Who is controlling us, and why?

Jaynes is particularly acute on the subjects of possession and schizophrenia. He believes that schizophrenia is a holdover from our bicameral past, when we heard god-voices and had to follow them:

Most of us spontaneously slip back into something approaching the actual bicameral mind at some part of our lives. For some of us, it is only a few episodes of thought deprivation or an instance or two of hearing voices. But for others of us, genetically lacking an enzyme to easily break down the bicameral products of continued stress into excretable form, it is a much more harrowing experience—if it can be called an experience at all. We hear voices of impelling importance that criticize us and tell us what to do. At the same time, we seem to lose the boundaries of ourselves. Time crumbles. We behave without knowing it.



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Our mental space begins to vanish. We panic, and yet the panic is not happening to us. There is no us. It is not that we have nowhere to turn; we have nowhere. And in that nowhere, we are somehow automatons, unknowing what to do, being manipulated by others or by our voices in strange and frightening ways in a place we come to recognize as a hospital with a diagnosis we are told is schizophrenia. In reality, we have relapsed into the bicameral mind.

Perhaps it's unfair to think of the schizophrenic as "bicameral man" trapped in a subjective universe he cannot comprehend. But it makes a good deal of sense. The schizophrenic is at war with himself. He can neither trust his voices, nor the "robust" men and women around him, who exist in another time-frame, and cannot speak for him.

What about possession? It seems to be the particular vengeance that the bicameral mind has taken upon subjective, conscious history; the former god-voice has now become the devil. "The bicameral mind has vanished and possession is its trace."

It's the language of possession that interests Jaynes. "The stricken individual does not run off and behave like a demon; he just talks like one."

Who is this talking demon? It's language itself that has become *possessed* for Jaynes. Language is the monster of our own history, a babble of voices that confuses, frightens and whips us at times. These "voices" come from different halves of the brain. Speech, as we have said, is dominated by the left cerebral hemisphere. But the right hemisphere isn't exactly silent. It has its own peculiar voice. And that voice is song. Jaynes is convinced that bicameral man hallucinated from this side of the brain. "The language of men was involved with only one hemisphere in order to leave the other free for the language of gods."

Again, this may sound like fanciful business, having a "vestigial godlike function" in one half of the brain. But it's less fanciful than you think.

We don't have to believe in gods or demons to measure Jaynes's book. It isn't only the schizophrenic who hears "voices." What about our poets and writers of fiction? I'm not trying to invent a portrait of the artist as proposed by Julian Jaynes. The screaming in the head that Jaynes describes can't be narrowed down to any one theory of art. But it's extremely helpful in clarifying the possible role of hallucination in the make-up of a narrative voice.

Our best writers often "hallucinate" their way into a text. I think of Joyce and Molly Bloom, and Benjy in *The Sound and the Fury*. There is something "godlike" in both these creations. I can't see them as clever acts of mimicry. Joyce may have had Nora Barnacle, his mistress-wife, as a model for Molly Bloom. He may have caught every scrap of Dublin and Galway in her voice. But I insist that Molly's music isn't Irish at all. There's little of Dublin in the last words of *Ulysses:*

. . . and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.

I'm not about to call James Joyce a schizophrenic who happened to write *Ulysses* from the different voices in his head. God bless any schizophrenic who can "hallucinate" Anna Livia Plurabelle and Molly Bloom. But I suggest that Molly's soliloquy is akin to an act of "possession," that Joyce's genius allowed him to enter into this female psyche and speak through her voice.

The same thing goes for Benjy. All the scholars in the world can talk about Faulkner's isolated patch of Mississippi heartland, and his ability to glean great materials from it, but this heartland doesn't explain Benjy, that idiot boy-man, with his own time-fractured rhythms. Benjy could have tumbled out of any heartland. He's an hallucinated creature who comes more from nightmare and boiling sympathy than from any picture of the South.

This is not to say that Benjy and Molly Bloom are the products of "automatic" writing, that their authors could have been dervishes who were able to invent in some magical trance. There's plenty of sweat in Molly Bloom. But there is also a transcendent genius, or devil, that helped shape her voice. And we owe a debt to Jaynes for describing that devil to us, and telling us how it arrived.

What about the rest of us? We all can't speak with the voice of Molly Bloom. Jaynes helps us understand the freakish distemper of our times. Whether there was an actual "split" in the minds of the Incas and the Mesopotamians is impossible to tell. But Jaynes has found a brilliant metaphor to discuss our distance from these men and women, and the possible loss we suffered as we leapt into "consciousness," and a subjective frame of mind.

Perhaps there will be a corrective to Jaynes's work, a factual inventory that will provide us with feelers and a second skin, so we can brush up against these earlier cultures and crawl into them. But until this happens, we have to depend on Julian Jaynes. He has revealed that "invisible country of touchless remem-berings and unshowable reveries," and our quest for certainty in the shadowed world we inhabit, a world of sharply fractured selves and things.

Jerome Charyn

Jerome Charyn's new book, *The Seventh Babe*, will be published in the spring by Arbor House.

Books Considered

Representative Man: Ralph Waldo Emerson in His Time by Joel Porte

(Oxford University Press; $15.95)

Like theoretical physics and other intellectual refinements closed to the multitude, Ralph Waldo Emerson is now an academic concern. Whitman, who said that he was merely "simmering" until Emerson brought him to a "boil," called Emerson "the actual beginner of the whole procession." Thoreau was irritated and jealous, but never doubted that Emerson was his intellectual father.

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Nietzsche, who laughed that Emerson had been deluded by German philosophy, carried Emerson's works on his frenetic journeys and considered him as great a prose writer as Leopardi, Merimée, Landor. Melville thought Emerson's views moonshine but nevertheless loved "all men who *dive*." A friend of Albert Camus's once told me how excited Camus had been by the essential ferocity of Emerson's vision.

Lewis Mumford at 84 may be the only living American man of letters for whom Emerson has been a continuing liberation. The "Emerson literature" does not include anything like Robert Penn Warren's defense of Dreiser, Randall Jarrell's of Whitman, Leon Edel's literary portrait of Henry James, the excited and even apocalyptic tributes to Melville by Charles Olsen, Bruce Franklin, Jean Giono. Not since Van Wyck Brooks's uncertain, dreamy and ill-fated book, in 1932, has a leading writer tried to get Emerson out of the Modern Language Association. The collected *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* (Harvard University Press)—14 volumes so far, by 11 editors—are sunk under an editorial apparatus listing Emerson's every cancellation, revision, insertion, variant, manuscript page number, etc. You can certainly depend on so much scholarly sweat for a crushing glimpse of Emerson's first and second thoughts. But only institutions can afford to buy the set and not even the most assiduous scholar can just *read* it.

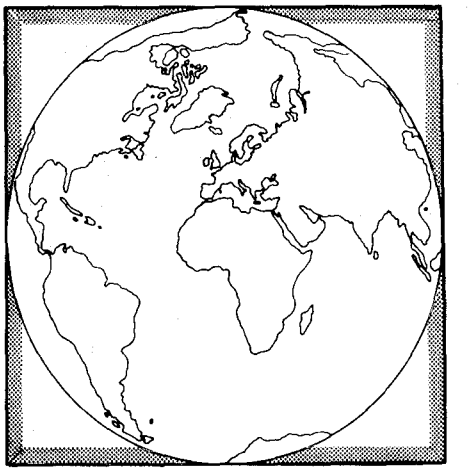
Joel Porte's literary biography of Emerson is a perfectly sound book, has many delicate insights, and is armed on every page with lovely quotations from that amazing stylist and rhetorical wizard. It will not bring Emerson back. The trouble with Emerson "research" is that it takes seriously Emerson's ideas, which are not in the least original, and overlooks the exact nature of his religious convictions and personality, which gave him unique authority. Porte thinks that since the genteel literary class in New England sanctified him, scholars like Henry Nash Smith have created a more realistic picture of Emerson by showing his difficulties and uncertainties in choosing a vocation. But *our* trouble with Emerson is not that he is a "saint," but that he is established, overlooked.

It is a scandal that Emerson should mean so much less to us than his disciple

Drawing of Emerson by David Schorr

from a letter to Carlyle, 1844

You sometimes charge me with I know not what sky-blue, sky-void idealism. . . . I fear I may be more deeply infected that you think me. I have very joyful dreams which I cannot bring to paper, much less to any approach to practice, and I blame myself not at all for my reveries, but they have not yet got possession of my house and barn . . .



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Thoreau. Thoreau has nothing like Emerson's range of interest and overmastering ambition, which was to be the intellectual father of a new country. Thoreau was just a boy to him—one of his two sons who happened to be a *writer* of genius, like Whitman. All the Transcendentalists had the same soft ideas; even Emerson's were borrowed. What set Emerson apart from his first grand prophecy of the free man's worship, *Nature*, was his invincible gift of personal conviction. As Novalis said of Spinoza, he was a "God-intoxicated man."

Emerson never recognized that so much belief in the "soul" is a gift. He thought he could pass conviction out to his audience, make it the gospel of a still unformed New World, because his own literary genius thoroughly possessed him. He despised every literary form not his own, practiced a minor and often stilted verse as if even poetry did not matter by the side of his gift for "revelation." The whole universe seemed to him "an open secret." He would keep it open.

Of course we read Emerson for pleasure, not to be converted. In his own way he can be as startling and life-infusing as Montaigne; you have to read not just the great opening essays, *The American Scholar, The Divinity School Address,* his totally inspired rhapsody on "The Poet," but *English Traits* and above all that great breviary of the modern mind, the *Journals*, to know what a cunning, resourceful and above all delightful writer our iconic Emerson can be.

But the Emerson "problem" arises because this startlingly original artist wrote as if "soul" were the same as style. Inspiration was all, from lecturer to audience, writer to reader. Although he was an unweariedly clever and witty commentator on other writers, he depended for effect on prophetic upwelling, scriptural cut and thrust. He not only believed that "soul" was the source of all good things, but that it duplicates divine power. "The maker of a sentence, like the other artist, launches out into the infinite and builds a road into Chaos and Old Night, and is followed by those who hear him with something of wild, creative delight."

As Professor Porte says, "it is the explosive and whirling language that makes the experience—a verbal trick, if one likes. But that is the only sort of magic Emerson knows to perform." Yet no one outside the history of religious enthusiasm has delivered himself to the reader with this evangelic force:

SELF-PORTRAIT

for Ralph Hamilton

"I was sitting in her living room,
looking very hard at the painting I had given her.
I asked her for a knife, and very deliberately
cut up the canvas. She was furious;
I told her, 'I'll paint you a good one.'

—Every painting is a self-portrait.

I always
straighten the pictures on people's walls . . .

I live at home,
painting while my parents are away at work.
I cook their dinner. It's a compromise,
but it's the only way I can afford to work;
better to compromise
my life.
And if I suffer—
so much the better; not
easy.

They're amazingly patient—
my mother thinks I'm a 'great artist.'
My paintings are all over the walls,
mostly piled up against the window
in the dining room. (The dining room
hasn't seen the light of day in three years.)

I read a lot, when I'm not painting,
and play the piano—badly.
I'm fascinated by words. Some of my paintings
have words in them: AWAY . . .
GET WELL. In college,
I wrote my autobiography.

I've been commissioned to do a portrait—
I've done several;
but I shouldn't do them,
I don't know how. Every portrait
becomes just another painting . . ."

In your self-portrait,
the blinds are open, but you are looking
away; your eyes green, and enormous.
There is a sunny street outside—
grey and black shadows cover your face; your mouth
twisted with irony, or tenderness,
refusing to speak.
You say, "It's just another painting."

—A train disappearing over a hill;
a burnt-out house; two trucks colliding
in mid-air;
your father; your mother; a baby;
a chair; a hand on a venetian blind . . .
"Every painting is a self-portrait."

Lloyd Schwartz

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For this was I born & came into the world to deliver the self of myself to the Universe from the Universe; to do a certain benefit which Nature would not forego, nor I be discharged from rendering, & then immerge again into the holy silence & eternity, out of which as a man I arose.

An ecstatic. Yet as every Emerson fan knows, no one is more cunning, adroit, more capable of reaching for the heart of the matter in the most offhand casual way. Whitman said that Emerson was greatest as "a critic or diagnoser." Confined to the monologue for his literary form, Emerson could break out only under his breath, as it were; he is a many-sided, paradoxical, often unsettling performer who reminds you of Nietzsche's sinuous performances; the essay becomes the freest, most fluid of forms, transforms itself at every turn as if it were more a dance than an intellectual exercise.

The energy behind this is a deep, intuitive, finally "unsayable" connection with the divine. It is just hauntingly *there*, like personal beauty; no wonder Emerson was grateful to "nature," which had given him the gift of faith. But faith as a wholly personal attribute, which needs no church, and in its own way can be disagreeably haughty (which Emerson was to mere novelists like Austen, Dickens, Hawthorne), is hard to sustain all through one's writing. Even Jesus cursed the fig tree. Life does not accommodate itself to ecstasy. All the great visionaries, in the Bible and out of it, talk and write pithily. Emerson mourned that he could write only "by spasms" and to "daemons that have no ears." He does not always follow up his angelic beginnings; no one can.

Reading Emerson is like drinking; you start so high that by the end of some pieces you cannot help getting depressed—not only by his obvious struggle to find alternate tropes for the same idea, but by his inability to live up to the excitement of that first draught. But when he is thoroughly commanded by his own "soul," his intimations can make you shiver. Obviously Emerson attempted the impossible. He sought in his own person, from a mere lecture platform, to be a great awakening. He and he alone would impart a new way of seeing the daily round that would give form to the latent promise of America. The *function* of America, he declared, was to destroy the gallows, to welcome the immigrant, to terminate the sinfulness of mankind. America, with Emerson for prophet, was original virtue.

How *could* one sustain this apocalyptic dream in the face of a country torn apart by slavery, increasingly secularized by technology and the profit motive—and above all "religiously" weakened by Emerson's contempt for the unnecessary church? Despite his prophetic self-image, Emerson *was* a distinctly modern writer, born of his faith in political, social and religious revolution. Creative writers are always the natural enemies of orthodoxy, which is institutional. Emerson summoned his busy countrymen to the kingdom of individualism dear to the radical Protestant genius. "Self-reliance" was turned into rugged individualism. I could wish that Professor Porte had concerned himself with the exploitation of Emerson's most famous sayings by entrepreneurs and mass educators totally indifferent to *his* gift of sight.

Yet as a writer, literary performer, stylistic prodigy, Emerson has intoxicated writers who discover his ease, wit, casual power. Of course no writer with such magnetism is read for style and wit alone; if you lack sympathy for the romantic religious imagination, Emerson is intolerable. The Emerson "problem" is that the free man's wholly personal religion needs the gift of expression, but the expression is nothing without the accidental, idiosyncratic gift of faith. Those without the ability to speak for themselves alone fall back on cults, drugs, the occult, would-be churches. It was institutions and group-think that Emerson most detested.

Many readers today simply cannot share, be endlessly rejoiced by, so much emphasis on "soul" and style as an attribute of "soul." But like the George Herbert Emerson adored; like the Thoreau and Whitman he made possible, Emerson at his best actually creates the mood, the medium, by which to appreciate him. You will never think the "spirit" so alive and bracing as when you read him.

Alfred Kazin

Alfred Kazin's most recent book is *New York Jew* (Knopf).

A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution by Michael Ignatieff

(Pantheon; $12.95)

Now that a number of historians have begun to examine the origins of incarceration, it is apparent that a variety of ideas and interests combined to create the penitentiary. The fit between the prison and an urban, industrial, post-Enlightenment society seems iron-tight, lending an air of inevitability to the movement. Michael Ignatieff's analysis brings many new insights to this scholarly consensus and in important ways complicates it. Surprisingly, given the centrality of the British experience, Ignatieff's study is the first systematic account of the development of the English prison. He does the job admirably, with a rich use of sources and a solid grasp of the social and political context. But whether he is prepared to grapple with all of the complexities he introduces remains less than certain.

Ignatieff moves us quickly through the pre-incarceration stage of punishment. Until late in the 18th century, criminal sanctions relied primarily upon the whip, the gallows, and the transportation of felons to the American colonies. Then, beginning in the 1770s, the penitentiary entered the first of two distinct stages of growth—a demarcation which is of critical importance. The idea of incarceration first became popular among an extraordinarily diverse coalition of supporters. The most famous and dedicated among them was John Howard, who hoped that the prison would save offenders from their sins. Convinced of the possibility of conversion and salvation for the most notorious individuals (God could redeem anyone, no matter how "vile a worm"), Howard was confident that a "regular, steady discipline in a Penitentiary House" would render criminals "useful members of society." His exposé of the wretched state of English jails and his belief in their reformatory potential coincided with the reformist outlook of

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English Quakers. Their bitter and first-hand experience with persecution prepared them to take up the cause, as did their commitment to the rehabilitative potential of the prison as a "purgatory, as a forced withdrawal from the distraction of the senses into silent and solitary confrontation with the self."

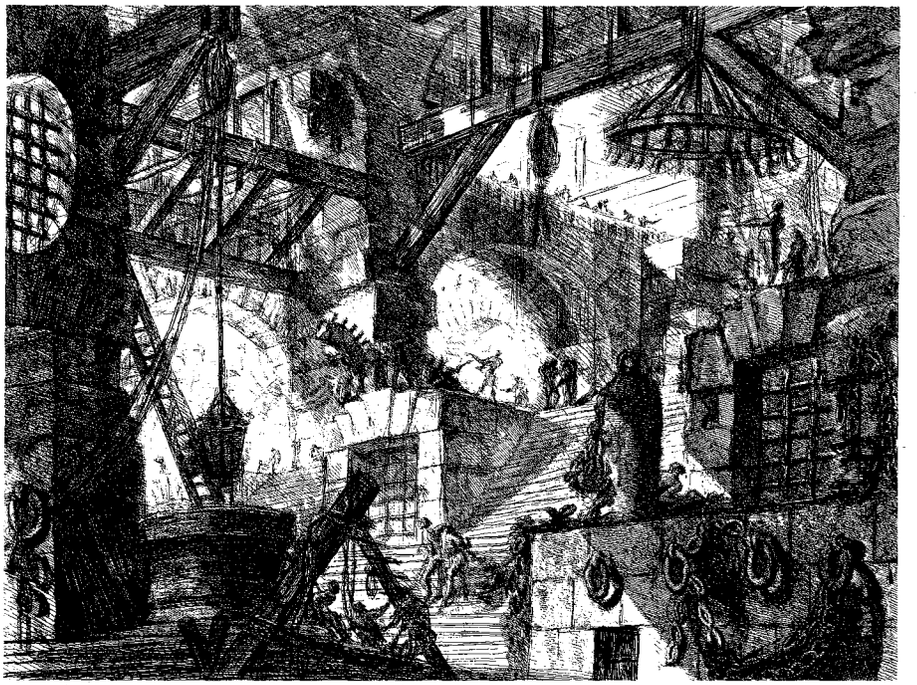
Moreover, such Quaker physicians as Joseph Fothergill, together with other doctors, conceived of the prison as a marvelous means of promoting hygienic reform. To their mind, disease and vice were inseparable (think of syphilis or alcoholism): the prison that would quarantine the offender would also cure him. By the same token, a number of manufacturers, Quakers and others, linked the design of the prison to the factory. Both institutions would suffuse a steady discipline which would uplift the character of the idle and the vicious.

The prison also became a political issue, with Whig leaders eager to publicize the corruptions of the jails in order to indict the Tories for administrative incompetence. And to the coalition also came Jeremy Bentham and Joseph Priestley, certain that the total quality of the new institution would make it reformatory. Dedicated to a materialistic interpretation of human behavior, according to which the individual was the product of his "associations," they argued that a setting which admitted only positive influences would eradicate deviant behavior. Add to this the difficulties of perpetuating banishment through transportation once the American colonies were in revolt, and the fears of many judges that a horror of the gallows was reducing the legitimacy of punishment, and you have a fair picture of the alliance making for the prison.

One penitentiary practice well represents the quality of the result. Shaving the head of an entering prisoner simultaneously satisfied hygienic principles (getting rid of lice), custodial principles (escape would be difficult), and religious principles (the humiliation would spark introspection and redemption).

Despite the grandiose design behind the prison, the first prisons were dreadful places—filthy, corrupt, negligent, brutal. Conditions were so unsatisfactory that one member of Parliament exclaimed in 1800: "The late Mr. Howard was certainly one of the worthiest men who had ever existed." But, he continued, "if he had been one of the worst he could not have suggested a punishment of a more cruel and mischievous description."

Such observations notwithstanding, very little changed. By 1815, prison reform entered a second generation; there was a rediscovery of the promise of incarceration. Unfortunately, Ignatieff rushes through this period (1815-1850); almost three-quarters of his book is devoted to the earlier time, and the care with which he traces the initial developments gives way to a less organized and more diffuse presentation. We do learn that philanthropists revived the ideal of rehabilitation—Elizabeth Fry took up Howard's cause. We learn as well that the program gained the support of magistrates who looked to the prison to embody a moral order which an urban and industrial society seemed to lack. This point is crucial to the American reliance on confinement.



"Le Carceri," 2nd State (c.1760), by Piranesi. Courtesy of The Granger Collection.

But Ignatieff does not clarify the links between the first and the second movements. Nor does he attempt to analyze why reform hopes were so thoroughly disappointed, or why the prisons so quickly and so uniformly degenerated into places of cruelty. Perhaps most importantly, he does not consider why the lessons of the first period were so easily ignored only a few years later.

To be sure, Ignatieff notes that the severity of prison punishment (the use of the treadmill, bread and water diets and long periods of solitary confinement), may have been a way of extending discipline to the lower ranks of society, appealing to those who feared that the lower classes, "the dangerous classes," threatened the social order. But his observations are too casual, they are not buttressed by much evidence, and they fail to consider why incarceration continued to attract not only the support of 19th-century law-and-order types but philanthropists as well. Fry herself conceded in 1835: "In some respects, I think there is more cruelty in our Gaols than I have ever seen before." And yet there was no significant attempt to strip the prisons of their legitimacy. On the contrary, incarceration became more and more respectable, perhaps even more so in England than in the United States. British wardens were known as "governors," and "gentlemen officers" took up the positions, even using them as stepping-stones for political careers. In the United States, wardens remained wardens, and I know of no one whose prison position became a starting point for political advancement.

Rather than fully exploring the paradox of the corrupted ideal yet ongoing legitimacy of the prison, Ignatieff leaps to the 1970s and goes off on a tangent about toleration of deviancy, an issue he paid little attention to in his historical treatment. This is all the more regrettable because his data are suggestive and ought to have been pursued in their own right.

Historians share a very special vantage point about prisons which sets us apart from other observers. No one knows better than we the record of the prison's failure. And the more evidence we compile, the clearer it becomes that

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administering a decent, let alone a rehabilitative, program is impossibly difficult. Past failures do not justify a prediction about the future, but the preponderance of evidence is so great—150 years of corruption in England and in the United States—as to make the policy altogether suspect. Nevertheless, as lengthy and damning as the record is, prisons still enjoy a legitimacy which is puzzling and disturbing.

Perhaps it is a matter of a failure of imagination. We have not been able to devise suitable alternatives to prison for four-time rapists or three-time bank robbers. Perhaps it is that prisons at least confined the despotism of the state behind walls; surveillance in the community can be more threatening to civil liberties than the horrors of incarceration. But the matter goes deeper. We seem unable to define with any clarity or consistency what a system of incarceration should do—or what it actually does.

It would be one thing to note our bankruptcy of solutions, admit to despair, recognize that prisons are terrible places, and then use incarceration as sparingly as possible. Such honesty would have its compensations. At the least, judges might pass shorter sentences; alternatives, such as work release and part-time confinement or decriminalization of "victimless crimes" (such as drug use) and a greater propensity to tolerate risks might be translated into practice. Instead, the illusions go on and on. James Q. Wilson suggests that a humane and strictly custodial program of incarceration for the purpose of incapacitation is appropriate, and that this goal makes the broad use of the sanction legitimate. Charles Silberman describes one model prison and implies that such designs can be generalized. Historians know better. Our skepticism is more complete—and more appropriate.

Ignatieff, in his final paragraph, reaches a similar conclusion. History, he is convinced, can "pierce through the rhetoric that ceaselessly presents the future consolidation of carceral power as a 'reform,'" which, in effect, "legitimizes the abuses of the present and seeks to adjust us to the cruelties of the future." He is right, both about the penitentiary and, by implication, about the value of the craft. Doubts about the relevance and significance of the discipline of history are easily dispelled in the arena of criminal justice.

David Rothman

David Rothman, professor of history at Columbia University, is author of a forthcoming book on 20th-century efforts to reform the asylum, to be published by Little, Brown.

The American as Anarchist: Reflections on Indigenous Radicalism by David DeLeon

(Johns Hopkins University Press; $14)

The American as Anarchist is not, in any strict way, a book about anarchism. It is, rather, a book about the varieties of native American radicalism, a kind of radicalism that stands opposed to the statist radicalism which for Mr. DeLeon is essentially a European import. His terms of definition include, within the scope of native radicalism, such extremely variant outlooks as those of the militant liberal, the right-wing libertarian and the left-wing libertarian. How far some of these are from anarchism of any known kind can be seen from the fact that he describes Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan as "mild" right-wing libertarians.

Mr. DeLeon is so insistent that he is describing a peculiarly American phenomenon that he leaves me little alternative but to consider myself an outsider, and therefore, perhaps, a more objective reviewer than his fellow countrymen might be.

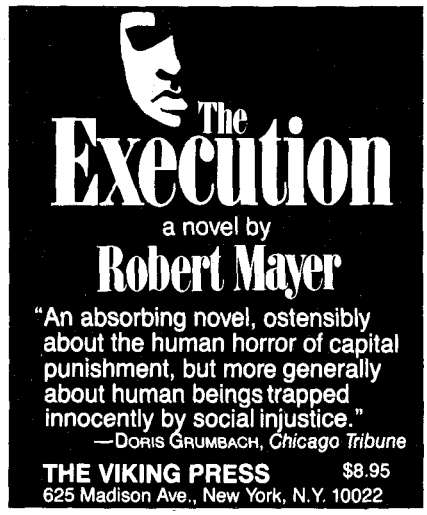
"Whereas the major English journals were the Anarcho-Communist *Freedom* and *Anarchy,*" De Leon says in relation to recent decades, "the main American voices were the *Individualist* and the Society for Individual Liberty." And both of these he equates with "right-wing libertarianism."

Now about 30 years ago I was one of the editors of *Freedom,* but since those days I have resumed my position in the Canadian world where I was born. Mr. DeLeon neatly pushes me outside on this count too, for he describes Canada as a country in which "a conscious preservation of traditional values has promoted both a self-identified conservative party (not a popular likelihood in the United States) and, in a far more class-conscious environment, a significant party for socialism."

Mr. DeLeon is generalizing, as we all do. There have been, however, plenty of highly individualist anarchists in Britain, which after all is a country with a great taste for the eccentric, and while eastern Canada does tend to be class-conscious in a European way, I suspect that western Canada, where socialism is strongest, is less class-conscious than parts of the eastern United States and no more so than, say, the states of the Pacific Northwest from which it imported the IWW.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there has been from the beginning in the United States a widespread distrust of the state and of authority that differentiates American society not only from the hierarchical monarchistic society that Britain exported to Canada, but also from the kind of revolutionary autocracy that emerged from the French Revolution. The Governor-General deputizing in Ottawa for Queen Elizabeth II is an unimaginable figure in an American context, but so are Marat and Robespierre.

And I am as convinced by Mr. DeLeon as I was by de Tocqueville and have been by my own observations that throughout American history there has been a significant oscillation between extreme conformity and extreme individualism. Doubtless the majoritarian drift to make behavior uniform is indeed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what activates the recurrent rebellion of the individual, the kind of rebellion that, from the days of Warren and Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, produced attitudes that at least in general philosophic terms approximated anarchism.

But it was always—and Mr. DeLeon is right—anarchism with a distinctly American tinge so long as it was carried by the native-born, and as such it has been peculiarly involved in the individualist strain in "American capitalism which forms most of the core of our history and vitally influences all life in the most capitalistic of nations." Even Josiah Warren (1798-1874), though he wanted to reform means of exchange with the aim of economic equalization, believed that property was necessary to guarantee freedom. So did the most celebrated of native anarchists, to whom Mr. DeLeon devotes a great deal of space, Benjamin Tucker (1854-1939). Even when, in the case of native left-wingers—they have sought some communal or other kind of lifestyle that negates orthodox capitalism, American libertarians have tended and still tend to be middle class by origin and, in the long run, middle class in their plans of action and even in their goals. Long before the appearance of hippie capitalists, radical communities tended, like the Oneida colony, which survives as a joint stock company making silverware, to be absorbed back into the dominant economic system.

This is what makes American libertarianism seem strange and at times disconcerting to outsiders who regard "libertarian" as a synonym for a kind of anarchism that is left-wing and anti-capitalist. I regularly receive and am astonished by American "libertarian" magazines which are filled with recipes for my financial survival as a small-scale property owner; such magazines sometimes even operate financial newsletters. Then there is the famous Dr. Murray Rothbard who turned from an extreme conservative into a libertarian pundit without ceasing to be as zealous a right-wing defender of the "free enterprise" system as Adam Smith. And there is that strange anomaly, the Libertarian party, which negates all anarchist traditions by having a political structure and taking part in elections, and which in 1976, according to Mr. DeLeon, "polled 183,000 votes, making it the largest third party, surpassing the combined totals of the Communist Party, Socialist Workers' Party, Socialist Party and Socialist Labour Party."

Though Mr. DeLeon does not say so, there is little doubt that most of the votes for the Libertarian party came out of the small business class, which is currently embattled against the state with its high spending and its everlasting financial extortions. In this sense it is very much in one American grain, that of the dissenters who right from the beginning, in Plymouth, defied Puritan authority and showed their rebellion by moving on into the empty land.

But one wonders, first of all, whether this kind of libertarianism is really quite so peculiarly American as Mr. DeLeon suggests, and whether other kinds of anarchist attitudes are really as un-American as he argues. Proudhon—"the father of us all" as the great anarchist Michael Bakunin called him—also believed that freedom could only be guaranteed if each man owned the property that would make him an individual producer. When he said "property is theft" he merely meant property used to exploit others' labor. And the doctrines of distributists like Chesterton and Belloc, and of French radical Catholics like Charles Péguy were much like those of the more thoughtful American right-wing libertarians.

One can readily grant Mr. DeLeon's argument that the authoritarian radicalism of the various Marxist sects is almost entirely detached from the realities of American life (because it seeks to transplant kinds of socialism developed in economically as well as politically backward communist countries). But it is difficult to accept his reasons for rejecting the immigrant strain in American anarchism, represented by Europeans who "appealed to peasant, artisan and proletarian traditions" which did not spring from native American experience, and who went beyond individualism to draw "much of their inspiration from visions of the 'natural cooperation' of agricultural villagers and the solidarity of workers."

The immigrant anarchists like Johann Most and Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman differed from the Marxist sectarians in that they did not seek to impose rigid alien doctrines. Yet the new teachings they brought broadened and enriched the American libertarian outlook. Even Benjamin Tucker learned from them and translated Bakunin; the IWW (of which Mr. DeLeon approves as a manifestation of native left libertarianism) borrowed heavily for its theoretical basis from syndicalist doctrines brought by immigrant anarchists, and the most important recent American anarchist intellectuals, like Paul Goodman and Kenneth Rexroth, have drawn freely from both American traditions. For American rebelliousness did not derive solely from the Pilgrims or from the rebels of the 1770s. There *is* another American grain. As a citizen of what is also largely an immigrant land, I recognize the renewal and enrichment of that insurgent tradition with every wave of newcomers, at least until World War I. One finds a purely native libertarianism only among Mr. DeLeon's "right libertarians" who show little recognizable derivation from any true anarchist tradition, native or alien.

Despite these criticisms, I think *The*

To our readers

National Public Radio's "William Shakespeare: A Portrait in Sound" will be welcomed by both teachers and students of Shakespeare. If they aren't put off by the lilting commentary of a chummy narrator who takes the listener through the streets of 16th-century Stratford and London, students will absorb colorful details about the period, some well-chosen material from the plays, and will gain a sense of Shakespeare the man. "A Portrait in Sound" is the first part of NPR's series entitled "The Shakespeare Festival," designed to coincide with public television's ambitious production of all 37 of Shakespeare's plays. Other features will include programs analyzing the themes, characters, language, and stagecraft of each of the plays to be broadcast by public television, a production of Ambroise Thomas's opera *Hamlet*, a live broadcast of English Renaissance music, and three lectures by distinguished Shakespearean scholars.

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American as Anarchist is a useful and timely book, since it charts out the most important contemporary American political strain outside the two principal parties, and shows how weak and irrelevant "statist radicalism," as Mr. DeLeon calls it, has become in the United States of the late 20th century.

George Woodcock

George Woodcock is the author of *The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell* (Little, Brown), among other books.

Soviet Perceptions of the United States by Morton Schwartz

(University of California Press; $12.50)

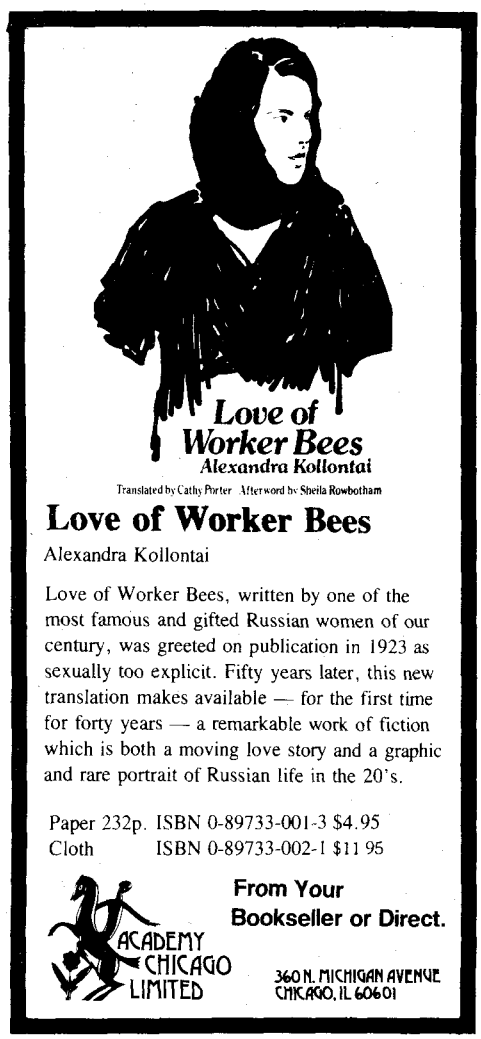
In 1975 when Zbigniew Brzezinski was just another pretty face, he and several other Americans of unofficial consequence visited Moscow to talk privately about East-West relations. In the middle of their conference at the USA Institute, the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* delivered itself of a prominently placed hatchet job on Brzezinski, deriding him as a cold warrior from the pre-detente era, a captive of outworn anti-Soviet clichés. It was not the first or worst such assault on Brzezinski, and he expressed more amusement than outrage at the article. His host, Institute director and Kremlin policy adviser Georgi A. Arbatov, let it be known that he took deeper offense. According to Institute hangers-on, presumably instructed to retail such inside reports, Arbatov had called the weekly's editor in a fury to denounce not the article but the timing of its publication. "You can call Brzezinski any name you like," Arbatov supposedly roared, "but don't do it when he's my guest in Moscow."

Well, no one ever said the path to Soviet-American understanding would be smooth. Even Professor Morton Schwartz, who has made a useful study of the writings of Arbatov and his fellow Americanists, concedes that their "increased sophistication does not necessarily lead to greater Soviet moderation. . . . [F]ar from encouraging Soviet policy makers to take a conciliatory posture, greater knowledge may have aggravated the problem of making any decision at all." Professor Schwartz's research, originally done under a State Department and USIA contract and now presented as a book, *Soviet Perceptions of the United States*, does, however, convincingly demonstrate that Soviet scholars of US affairs are more than simple analysts of our society. Their views are put in print "to justify and gain support for a conciliatory posture towards the United States," Schwartz concludes. "Moscow's Amerikanisty are also the salesmen of detente."

Packaging the product still takes considerable doing. Whether because they know no better or because some truths remain unpalatable, the Soviet analysts-advisers continue to peddle some pervasive misperceptions of what makes the US tick. Seeing Armand Hammer of Occidental Petroleum, Donald Kendall of Pepsi Cola and David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan as friends of peaceful coexistence, they inflate not just their personal role but the influence of the business community on American policy. Historians take note. According to Arbatov, "The discontent of business circles [was] one of the chief factors forcing President Johnson in 1968 to abandon plans for escalating the war [after Tet] and to abandon the presidency." Naturally, Zionist groups are seen as holding important, sometimes determining, leverage over decisions on the Middle East and Soviet Jewry. Predictably, Watergate and its aftermath remain a mystery. "Soviet officials," Schwartz reports, "are simply unable to understand what [Nixon] did, or could have done, that compelled him to resign." (Dealing only with the printed Soviet record—on which no analysis of Nixon's downfall has yet been written, Schwartz misses the explanation given the Soviet television viewer in August, 1974, by Leonid Zamyatin, then and now the Kremlin's chief press spokesman. His analysis: Nixon was done in by the enemies of detente.)

Given these ideologically imposed blind spots, however, the sophistication of the USA Institute Washington-watchers about the complexity of the American scene becomes more impressive in Schwartz's straightforward, lucid telling. In some fields they have managed to dispense with *their* outworn clichés almost entirely. American capitalism is no longer seen as monolithic nor as inevitably questing after expansive, foreign adventure. Even the Pentagon, Schwartz records, is not viewed as "uniformly evil." Public opinion is conceded a role in policy making, and the policymakers themselves—whether in Congress or academia or the media—are seen separately as good and bad guys, not just as an undifferentiated extrusion of permanent class interests.

Presumably—and Professor Schwartz makes the presumption with caution—the scholarship the USA Institute has fostered since its creation in 1967 is a Good Thing. It is not simply that knowledge of the United States diminishes the likelihood of Soviet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miscalculations, but that the purveyors of that knowledge "tend to emphasize the positive aspects of detente and of political trends in the United States. It is their mission, their intellectual commitment and their interest to do so."

From this uncontestable ground, a well-documented analysis of what has come to be a "lobby" for better US-Soviet relations, the author moves to a less persuasive conclusion. Since there is a dovecote near the Kremlin, Americans should do as much as possible to amplify the cooing, as little as possible to ruffle the feathers of the doves. Professor Schwartz's recommendation is given best in his own words:

> *. . . in order to bolster the position of the moderate trend within the Soviet political leadership, the United States should—as a matter of deliberate policy—seek to act in such a way as to reinforce the position of those who share it. . . . We should . . . make due allowance for Soviet sensitivities regarding the issue of equality of status . . . avoid policies which indicate that the Soviet Union is being dealt with by the United States on anything less than a fully equal basis. . . . [T]he White House should be aware that its human rights policy is, inevitably, seen in the Kremlin as an affront to Soviet domestic sovereignty and international prestige.*

The advice is well-meant but unconvincing. It ignores intrusive realities in the US and the USSR. Playing to Soviet "sensitivities," Henry Kissinger and Gerald Ford decided, for example, to keep Alexander Solzhenitsyn out of the White House and ended up—for that reason, among others—losing their own places there. Arbatov and company, for their part, have prevailing winds to which they must bow, too. Professor Schwartz does not mention it, but Arbatov showed in a major *Izvestia* polemic against "The Maneuvers of the Enemies of Detente" in September, 1975, that he was as capable of painting the US as a bigot-ridden police state as he is of giving a more sophisticated view of our diversity.

Finally, as the episode with Brzezinski suggests, the head of the USA Institute is, after all, just one of the players in the Soviet hierarchy. While Americans can be glad that he is in the game, we would be mistaken in elevating him from useful interpreter to indispensable ally. This fall he told visiting Americans that there had been a very close call in the Kremlin in July over policy toward the United States. After President Carter's Annapolis speech and the protests over trials of Soviet dissenters, Moscow's hard-liners were itching for escalation. Instead, SALT has moved ahead, and talk of a trade boom is again in the air. The turnaround may be due in part to Arbatov's counsel, but his advice was reinforced by American firmness, not by our trying to court Moscow's moderates or placate their *amour-propre*.

Alfred Friendly Jr.

Alfred Friendly Jr., a former Moscow correspondent, is writing a study of Soviet dissent for Summit Books.

Before the Revolution
A View of Russia Under the Last Csar
by Kyril FitzLyon and Tatiana Browning

(The Overlook Press; $15)

The 300 photographs collected by Tatiana Browning portray the tremendous diversity of social classes and religious, ethnic and national groups in Russia during the reign of Nicholas II (1894-1917). Kyril FitzLyon's succinct text adds vivid details on customs of dress, housing and government regulating the lives of the nobility, the peasants and the pilgrim-beggars, from Moscow to Vladivostok. Shown above: in back of the Winter Palace (left), a group of peasants prepare for the annual task of breaking the ice on the Neva.

A Christina Stead Reader

(Random House; $12.95)

The best of intentions, in art as in life, do not always attain their desired ends. *A Christina Stead Reader* was presumably conceived with the hope of whetting interest in the work of this prolific and largely ignored writer. Until now Stead has been known almost exclusively for her unflinching novel of family-life, *The Man Who Loved Children*, published in 1940 and reissued—with a wonderfully comprehending afterword by Randall Jarrell—in 1965, when it generated a flurry of acclaim. *The Man Who Loved Children* became the sort of book that is treated as

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a personal discovery: it signified intensely, or not at all. In the meantime, most of Stead's other novels remained out of print; although she should have been one of those figures, like Jane Bowles or Anna Kaven, to benefit from the feminist reawakening, she has not. Because she has written a lot (13 novels and short-story collections thus far) and, on the face of it, about many different subjects, she would seem to be the perfect candidate for publication in excerpted form.

The present volume is unmistakable evidence to the contrary: Christina Stead will not be nibbled at. She is a writer on the grand scale; she needs space—like D. H. Lawrence, whom she resembles in other ways—and to curb her is to make her look foolish. There is something *architectural* about Stead's prose which only justifies itself from the longer view; one notices rather quickly in these short takes that Stead is not really a stylist. She throws adjectives around indiscriminately—"The hideous low scarred yellow horny and barren headland . . ."—and she is rarely graceful. She is, in fact, a remarkably *uncomfortable* writer because she sees clearly into the ways of the world and she is mirthless about what she sees: "A man cannot love himself, but all men do, and so there is no satisfaction in the world for we must clasp another body, informed by another spirit to ourselves."

Christina Stead. Photo by Mark Gerson.

This collection spans over 40 years of Christina Stead's output and includes selections from eight novels. Although she writes about financial empires (*House of All Nations*), impoverished fishing communities (*Seven Poor Men of Sydney*), and jaded sophisticates (*The Beauties and the Furies*) with equal familiarity, Stead's theme resounds with grim consistency from behind the many shapes she gives it. Hers is an obsession with human savagery, especially in its licit manifestations—"the naked domestic drama and hate of parent and child"—which are unavoidable because they are endemic to our race. "The brutish spirit of solitude" hovers over all her characters, a spirit they are able to dispatch, however temporarily, through developed powers of will and imagination: "She no longer thought about marrying him: her sentiment enfolded him like a soft blanket to keep off the chills and aches; her part was to enfold him." It is not so much that the possibility of love is *absent* from her novels, as that it appears with radically less conviction than more malignant possibilities: "The children of Fisherman's Bay shouted after him, 'Joey, Jo, Jo, 'Ullo, Jo,' when he went past in the evenings. He knew what this song meant; it meant, 'You are rubbish thrown out by men, and we are allowed to play with you, no one even has a salvage interest in you.'"

Christina Stead is a major writer; her flaws stem directly from her inability to be casual (again, like Lawrence) and the ruthless honesty with which she perceives even frivolous pastimes. Her work deserves a fuller reading than is provided by this *Reader*, but it probably comes as no surprise to Stead herself that recognition of her worth has been so slow in coming. ". . . . [T]he things that are tabu," she writes, "are always accepted as part of society, like the dark of the moon." By refusing to pay attention to her we are refusing to pay attention to the dark side of ourselves.

Daphne Merkin

Daphne Merkin is a New York writer.

Essays in Feminism by Vivian Gornick

(Harper & Row; $10)

This collection of essays, written mostly for *The Village Voice* between 1969 and 1978, offers an array of commentary that chronicles some of the issues and some of the shifts in perspective that mark the contemporary women's movement. Vivian Gornick's exhortations in the early essays recall the exuberance of those of us who read Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in the early 1960s and carried it around, pressing it on bewildered friends. Everything seemed so simple. By 1976 she is writing (in "The Price of Paying Your Own Way") of " . . . the confusion and ignorance with which we have all approached the complex Pandora's box so casually labeled 'liberation.'" Ms. Gornick's enjoyment of irony and dislike of dogma go a long way toward balancing her initial naiveté.

Many of the selections are illuminating, some are puzzling, almost all are frustratingly brief. There are pieces on women's fears of success and money; on visits to a consciousness-raising session, to Matina Horner at Radcliffe, and to 91-year-old Alice Paul who helped draft the ERA in 1923. We learn of a French high school teacher's imprisonment for her affair with a student ("On Trial for Acting Like a Man"), and of the journalist Dorothy Thompson's stormy marriage to Sinclair Lewis ("The Conflict Between Love and Work"). But the portrait of Thompson—which, along with portraits of Margaret Fuller, Agnes Smedley and Rahel Varnhagen, are meant to serve as lessons in "female outsidedness"—is presented, despite the author's better intentions, in a haze of retroactive feminism that yanks the life it examines out of context. By the time she visits Alice Paul, one year later, Ms. Gornick is able to see and to embrace the importance of that difference in context.

Literature plays an important part in the record of our culture—and in what Ms. Gornick believes is the necessary rereading of that culture. Thus, she examines the misogyny of Mailer, Miller, Bellow and Roth ("Why Do These Men Hate Women?"), and the

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treatment of the female experience by Hardy, Wharton and James ("Female Narcissism as a Metaphor in Literature"). Both pieces are thoughtfully constructed, even if one would argue whether Lily Bart died of narcissism. By now the author has come a long way from an earlier piece on the unsuitability of male syntax for women writers ("Toward a Definition of the Female Sensibility"). In that essay she offers a variety of confused assertions: in one instance describing men's illusions of omnipotence; in another, envying the motivation men derive from knowing that no one will ever take care of them, that the world is a lonely, scary place. One would think that the human dilemma of aloneness propels both men and women—connecting, rather than dividing, us.

Important issues are missing. The politics of reproduction and of birth control are not mentioned; nor is the issue of child rearing (though the importance of fathers is touched upon ever so slightly). But Vivian Gornick seems to have served, really, as a cultural critic, and as such she provides an interesting and useful record of contemporary thought. She writes intelligent prose, full of human awareness and political conscience.

Ellen Posner

Ellen Posner is a freelance writer and editor.

Recapitulation
by Wallace Stegner

(Doubleday; $8.95)

Recapitulation is a novel about memory. It is full of what Bruce Mason, its middle-aged protagonist, calls "the fragrance of lost possibility." You don't have to be 60 to be haunted by that fragrance; all you need is a little regret and the right releasing occasion and it will all come back: your mistakes, your losses, your inadequacy to your own experience, the people you left and the people who left you. Nietzsche praised the power to forget; without "animal oblivion," he felt, it wouldn't be possible to live in the present. But memory can be a power too. If it carries a sufficiently strong charge, it can change us—or help us to accept what nothing can change.

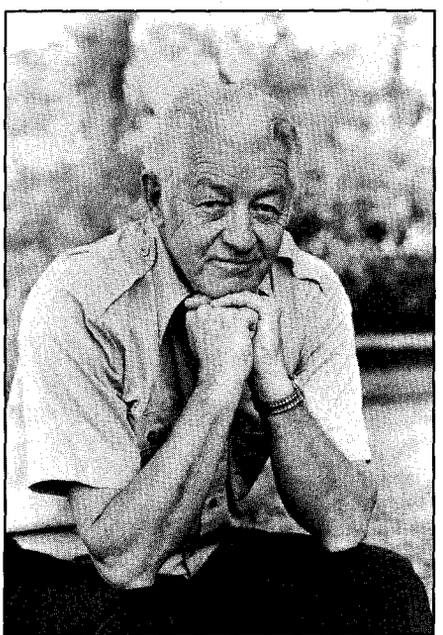
Bruce Mason's memories are of this sort. They are pitiless and self-revealing but in the end they are reconciling, even healing, and the mounting force with which Wallace Stegner presents them makes this novel moving in the full old-fashioned way, with the gloves of irony off, the games of language suspended. The story is an exploration of the feelings evoked by "home," that heart-breaking word.

Nearly 50 years after leaving Salt Lake City for law school in the "East"—as Minnesota must appear from the far side of the Rockies—Bruce Mason returns to bury his aunt Margaret. Margaret's funeral, it soon becomes clear, is merely the pretext for his return. The real reason is that Mason is finally ready to face what his whole life has been an effort to live down, to forget, to bury beneath the honors and achievements of a distinguished diplomatic career. He thought he had left Salt Lake City behind him, and with it his old self, but in the two days it takes to see Margaret to her grave he finds that this is not so:

> *That what he had done in his naiveté and egotism and innocence should persist so long and so unchanged. That he should understand it and be cured of it but still contain it. That calf love, like childhood unhappiness and boyhood self-mistrust, like mother love and father hate . . . should be so helplessly a thing that lasts.*

Mother, father, best friend, first girl: this is the stuff of common memory which Stegner evokes in a half-dozen scenes dominated by a series of prosaic but expressive objects: a cabbage, a college sweater, a brace of ducks, and a headstone.

The cabbage is an unlikely token of love, "a great cold vegetable rose," which 13-year-old Bruce Mason gives to his mother "to compensate her for the uncertainties and hardships" of her self-abnegating life. The chief hardship is her husband Harry: a reckless, vaguely violent man, the operator of a speakeasy, possibly a pimp. Her kitchen is Bruce's sanctuary from this unfortunate father. She deserves her cabbage, and the scene in which Bruce offers it to her is tender and sad and lightly wry all at once: "She put out her arms and he dropped the cabbage and crept into them. Hugging each other in the sanctuary kitchen, they were both about half comforted." Like many of the moments in *Recapitulation*, this scene seems to have been taken from a well-made play in which the objects the actors handle



Wallace Stegner. Photo by Charles Painter.

are made to express what cannot be spoken in the dialogue. Symbolism, since it carries a suggestion of unconscious determination, is not the right word for this. It seems, rather, to be an intrinsic property of memory, for when we recall scenes from the past we often do center their whole emotion on chance objects, as if our unspoken feelings have gone out of us and into the props of our lives. I am suggesting, to make a point of this, that Stegner's technique is wonderfully suited to his subject. His art of memory seems perfectly natural; it doesn't strike us as a device at all, and that is the mark of supreme artistry in realistic fiction.

The college sweater is the token of Bruce's divided love for Nola Gordon. Nola was "the biggest thing in your life," an imaginary companion reminds him, "and she threw you down." Mason never married, and though he says Nola isn't the reason, we don't believe it. Nola hurt. She left him for Jack Bailey, and that hurt even more since Bailey was a less licit version of his father: cocky, arrogant and utterly without self-doubt, a combination "probably attractive,

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perhaps irresistible." Bruce lost Nola to Bailey in a strip-poker game at the end of the decisive summer of his life, the summer that began when he gave his college sweater to a restless country girl.

This presentation scene is splendid—not least for the way it mirrors the blend of awkwardness and smooth deception so typical of such scenes in life. Both hide what they know the other won't be able to face: Bruce, that he is going to law school in the fall (the application papers sit in his back pocket throughout the scene, a marvelous dramatic prop); and Nola, that she has "lost her virtue" to an old high school beau. The scene takes place in Nola's room; her old beau is there when Bruce arrives, making a last desperate suit for her hand. He fails; the sweater crushes his hopes. But his theatrical outrage foreshadows Bruce's fatuity when Nola later drops *him*. Poor Bruce. He loves Nola but he has to leave Salt Lake to save his life. The papers in his pocket are his ticket out—to law school, to the State Department, to a lonely life. Like Bruce's later parting from Joe Mulder, his best friend, this scene with Nola is full of the pathos of American mobility.

Mason's memories of his mother, his girl and his old friend stir him, but they have no reference to his present life, nor do they challenge his habitual way of looking at the past. I kept waiting for Stegner to bring Mason's past and present together in a really galvanic memory, even though I knew that a man of Mason's years was probably beyond change, certainly beyond being changed by memory. Stegner didn't let me down. He saved the crusher for last—Bruce's memory of his father.

"Boomer, dreamer, schemer, self-deceiver, bootlegger, eventually murderer and suicide, always a burden, alway enraging, always the harsh judge who must be appeased" is how Harry Mason has always figured in his son's memory. Harry was why Bruce had to leave Salt Lake, why he was driven to become an unimpeachably respectable man, and why he lacked the sexual conviction to hold passionate Nola. Harry caused the death of Bruce's brother through indifference, and lost the love of his other son through sheer brutishness. When he died, eight months after Bruce's mother and exactly a year after Nola took up with Bailey, Bruce buried him without a headstone. His "father hate" went deep. It was the truth upon which he had built his life.

But "the truth is like a lizard; it leaves its tail in your hand and runs away; it knows that it will shortly grow another." That's from Turgenev; it's one of the epigraphs of *Recapitulation*, and it's prophetic. Under the pressure of the long suppressed memory of the last time Bruce saw him alive, the truth about Harry Mason grows a new tail.

The occasion was a duck feast. Bruce had shot the ducks and, in his third gift of the novel, had brought them to Harry's poolroom. When he first arrived in Salt Lake, Bruce avoided this pool hall —as if to escape the recollection of Harry's grief at *his* memory of his late wife's fondness for blue wing teal, as if the son who had built his life on father hate could not admit that his father had also known inwardness and love, and that his love had been true, his loss deep. But in the early morning hours before Margaret's funeral, this complicating memory comes back to him, and so when he buries Margaret the next day he also buries his hatred for Harry in a way that will move you to tears. Wallace Stegner has won many literary prizes over his long career, and I hope he wins another for *Recapitulation*.

Jack Beatty

Brief Reviews

Gracchus Babeuf: The First Revolutionary Communist by R. B. Rose

(Stanford University Press; $18.50)

This judicious biography is not likely to please some of the historians whose labors have contributed to the ever-expanding body of minute detail about the short life of François-Noël (later Gracchus) Babeuf. Although R. B. Rose generously announces that he wrote his book because of the need to take "recent researches into account," he concludes that both Babeuf's life and historical significance have been badly distorted by the political tendencies of historians who, with good or ill will, have industriously searched for the ancestors of revolutionary socialism and totalitarian democracy.

Poor, largely self-educated, ambitious, Babeuf was working as a *feudiste*, a notary employed to increase income from feudal dues, when the coming of the French Revolution transformed him into a defender of the peasants of Picardy. The experience of urban politics in Paris introduced him to the insurrectionary direct democracy of the *sans-culottes*, and convinced him that governments ought to and *could* insure every citizen food, clothing and shelter, security in old age, and care in sickness. After the Thermidorean reaction Babeuf organized a conspiracy to overthrow a bourgeois regime which had lost little time exposing the propertyless to the rigors of food scarcity, inflation and the free play of market forces.

Babeuf's "Conspiracy of the Equals" (1796) was betrayed from within before he and his friends even attempted the armed uprising by which they hoped to capture power and institute a fiercely egalitarian communist society. But this futile, often inept conspiracy nevertheless was a significant moment in modern history: for the first time communism had become a *political* ideal rather than a merely utopian vision routinely advocated by 18th-century writers but feared by no one.

Babeuf's claim to the title of "first revolutionary communist" has seldom been disputed. Soviet and western communist historians, however, have claimed for Babeuf the honor of anticipating Lenin's doctrine of the dictatorship of a revolutionary elite for an indefinite period. From the right comes the charge that Babeuf wished to establish a totalitarian state. In fact, as Rose meticulously demonstrates, Babeuf deeply distrusted the concentration of political power and insisted until the end that only a vigilant democratic people jealous of its sovereignty could prevent the emergency of new tyrannies. Three months of emergency dictatorship, he believed, would suffice to build a free, democratic and communist society of "perfect equality."

It is a pity that this valuable book seems to have been written for the tiny

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academic audience willing to tolerate grey and sober prose. Perhaps, to take a kindlier view, the book was conceived as an immense crescendo leading to its only eloquent paragraph, the last:

. . . Babeuf asserted the absolute human right to equality in the important things in life and the right to control and (when necessary) to resist the exercise of political power. Inevitably, . . . he was personally broken by the struggle, and he died conscious of failure. Yet he died with a clear conscience. What one man could do to vindicate the ideals of equality and freedom, he had done.

Richard Bienvenu

Richard Bienvenu teaches history at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

The Killing Zone by Frederick Downs

(Norton; $9.95)

The Killing Zone is a diary of Frederick Downs's Vietnam tour that began on September 8, 1967 and ended in January 1968 as he lay on a hospital stretcher repeating his name, rank and serial number to a nurse moments after a "Bouncing Betty" booby trap exploded near him, severing one arm and maiming the other. That fall, after months of treatment and rehabilitation, Downs reenrolled at a Colorado university. One day on campus, a man greeted him, motioned toward the metal hook that was his left hand and asked, "Get that in Vietnam?" Downs answered that he had. "Serves you right," the man remarked.

Ten years later, Downs's hurt and anger and shame have not abated. To exorcise the memories that gnaw deep inside him, but more, to let people know not what he thought of Vietnam, but what it was like to fight in Vietnam, he wrote *The Killing Zone*.

We are not told how he got to Vietnam—was he drafted? Did he enlist?—but once there, his mission is uncomplicatedly clear: follow orders, fight hard, do the best you can. Not even a disparaging "You'll be sorrryyy!" from a homeward-bound American diminishes his tenderfoot enthusiasm for combat.

Given the quotidian terror of jungle combat, Downs's diary is oddly flat and unemotional, but not without revealing the humdrum as well as heroic visages of war. One hot, lazy afternoon, Downs hollers after a stray village dog, then claims it for target practice. "I carefully lined up the M-16's sights on the dog and squeezed the trigger," he writes indifferently. "It was an easy shot of fifty meters. I nailed him with the first shot, pumped a few more rounds in him just for the hell of it. . . ." Later, on a mission near Tam Ky, thick hedgerow isolates him from his platoon. Suddenly, bullets crackle all around him. He lunges into the nearest hootch and prepares to return enemy fire. His rifle jams. "How stupid to have gotten myself into this mess!" he tells himself unceremoniously. Then, instinctively, as in a thousand war movies, he resorts to hand-to-hand combat, grabbing the dink's fatigue shirt and sliding a bayonet down his throat. "I threw his billfold and his Thompson down the well and staggered in a daze on the trail. I had won." Even in his bald, expressionless prose, his daring is unmistakable.

Only a few months before the Tet offensive, his batallion is flown to Chu Lai. On orders to shoot any non-American or non-ARVN soldier, Downs peers through some jungle brush and eyes a group of old men, women and children. His conscience takes hold and countless thoughts pass through his mind. "Women, old men, and kids. Obviously noncombats. . . . But this is a free-fire zone. There are not supposed to be civilians in this area. . . . Everyone is to be considered the enemy. . . . What if the dinks aren't innocent? My men depend on me to keep them alive." He is about to order fire when grunt Spagg whispers in his ear, "No! Sir, you can't!" For a moment Downs contritely relents, then, after the dinks refuse capture and run away, he gives the command. This episode would be the nadir of his career, one of those awful memories that haunts him still.

The Killing Zone is unlike any other Vietnam book I have read. Downs has withheld his rage and written a numbing book that is as explicit, as honest, as Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July*, but in a completely different way. There is no stridency in Downs's voice, no moral to be pondered. "This is the way it was for us," he says simply, "the platoon of Delta One-six."

Raphael Sagalyn

Raphael Sagalyn is a contributing editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

"FRESHLY FIRED, Bella Abzug quickly surfaced on ABC's *Issues and Answers* to denounce this latest affront to women everywhere. The two interviewers, politely skeptical, were not needed; Bella had brought her own questions along, and treated theirs as impertinences. She insists that she was as nice as pie in the meeting with the President. All viewers who believe that raise your hands."

For a free copy of the current issue of National Review, write to Dept. R-3, 150 East 35th Street, New York, New York 10016.

Margaret Sanger: A Biography of the Champion of Birth Control by Madeline Gray

(Richard Marek; $15)

In the course of her lifelong crusade for birth control in America, Margaret Sanger gave countless speeches throughout the country, sneaked her *Family Limitation* pamphlets through the mail in defiance of the Comstock Law, set up and managed clinics, and lobbied to legalize the giving of contraceptive advice. Imprisoned several times for her activities, she turned each arrest to her advantage, gaining publicity and widespread support for her movement. Since she was so absorbed by her birth control work, Sanger's private life suffered: she often ignored her husbands, neglected her children, and turned all her remaining energies to her many lovers, H. G. Wells and Havelock Ellis among them.

According to the evidence accumulated by Madeline Gray, Margaret Sanger's immense dedication to her cause stemmed largely from a need to be preeminent in her field. Furious that Mary Ware Dennett organized the National Birth Control League, Sanger forced Dennett to drop the words "birth control" from the League's title, claiming that she had coined the phrase. (Actually, journalist Robert Parker invented the term, although Margaret Sanger always claimed the honor.) When her sister Ethel's hunger strike in jail drew tremendous public attention to the fight for birth control, Margaret stopped all mention of Ethel so that her

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own upcoming trial might receive undiluted publicity.

With the aid of many quotations from hitherto restricted letters and diaries, Madeline Gray gives a vivid portrait of Margaret Sanger as others saw her and as she presented herself. Sanger once wrote: "My biography will be harder to write than that of Havelock Ellis, because I am not consistent and I have seldom revealed what I really feel or believe." Despite her excellent research, this lack of honesty ultimately has defeated Madeline Gray in that most rarely accomplished biographer's task: to reveal the hidden inner life of her subject.

L.D.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

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London Diarist

Decline

Britain has been in decline for a very long time. It would be rash to assume, then, that it couldn't have much decline left. Who, after all, knows how much decline there is in a great country? An American is constrained to hope there's a lot. Not out of sympathy, mind you, but out of self-concern. We used to think the British plucky and brave: all that stuff about their "finest hour" and the royal family eating spam. But there's nothing uplifting about the English response to their umpteenth and present crisis. And there is also little reason to expect that either of their political parties can come up with anything like a solution. The Labour government is indentured to its left-wing backbenchers whom Prime Minister James Callaghan and his colleagues, including such former radical reliables as Michael Foot and Shirley Williams, also think bordering on the crazed. Then there's the trade union cohort, with its enormous leverage in the extra-parliamentary party. The sewage and water workers have threatened to strike even though they've been offered a 14 percent wage hike. Outrageous? Well, maybe. But they've been so desperately underpaid that even with such an increase they'd still be hopelessly far behind. In the meantime, the railroads run unpredictably, if at all. Being admitted to a hospital is tougher than getting into Eton. Garbage is piled high everywhere in this city. "The rats are showing themselves in London," a mean-spirited aristocrat of my acquaintance observed. "But mostly," he said with barely disguised glee, "in the homes of the strikers."

One old socialist intellectual told me he would cast his first Conservative vote at the next election. "For me," he intoned, "voting Tory is like forgetting Jerusalem. 'Let my right hand wither and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.' Nonetheless. . . ." Nonetheless, a pig's ass. There's nothing attractive about the Tories. Theirs is still the ideology and habit of swagger. No longer able to posture so to the ex-colonials (the Arabs now humiliate the English), they'd be satisfied if the workers would tolerate such arrogance.

The big problem with England, not unlike that of our own country, is that there is precious little growth in productivity. It's hardly to Labour's credit that productivity has become one of its taboo subjects. For it's precisely when there are few gains in productivity that inflation becomes intolerable. And that's also when the unions are made to appear most unreasonable. "Always, *always*, when we come to a 'crisis,'" E. P. Thompson wrote recently. "The working people are the real threat (to 'us,' to 'society'), and their wages lead to 'ruin' and the 'abyss.'"

James Callaghan isn't anyone's dream prime minister. But Mrs. Margaret Thatcher isn't exactly what a troubled nation should want either. The former editor of the *New Statesman*, Paul Johnson, whom I respect and trust despite his apostasy to the right, tells me that hers is a remarkable intelligence. Her rhetoric is shrewd, if often not just. Therefore, it's precisely the sense that she's a politically honest woman that is frightening. Oh yes, I do have sympathy for her foreign policy views: like her, I don't think that the vague jurisdiction known as the third world should exert much moral authority over us. But politics are only irresponsibly determined by the polemics of a pep rally, and that's where she seems to excel. Mrs. Thatcher doesn't think that Jimmy Carter stands up as a moral man. It's apparently not simply that she doesn't often trust his word, but that, on the rare occasions when she does, he seems always to be saying or doing something dangerous.

Carter is not taken seriously in the UK. Certainly not at Hard Rock, a hamburger and ice cream joint frequented both by American tourists with junk food nostalgia and young English people tired of overcooked gruel. I was joined at Hard Rock by a frequent *TNR* contributor living in England. We managed something of a conversation above the din of punk recorded by Devo, a group of which neither my friend, nor, I assume, you had ever heard. Suddenly, the voice of Jimmy Carter came on. Was it an emergency announcement on the radio, or some comedian imitating Carter? At first, most people in the restaurant seemed to intuit the latter. But it wasn't. It was J.C. himself, lachrymose, fatuous, hoaky; which is when the laughing started. Then it stopped. Too boring.

The Viennese satirist and philologist Karl Kraus used to warn that western society would perish from the falsehoods of its press. *The Guardian* (Manchester) is making one of these self-destructive falsehoods a routine. In its reportage on Iran, it identifies the forces of now departed Prime Minister Bakhtiar as "Imperials," and the followers of the Ayatollah Khomeini as "Republicans." Capital letters and all. Despite Bakhtiar's designation by the shah, the cause for which he spoke and struggled was clearly parliamentary and democratic. Had he not spent five years in jail as an opponent of the Pahlavis? Does his left arm, maimed by the SAVAK, say nothing? How about Bakhtiar's activity for the Republicans in the Spanish civil war? Or his role as a courier with the French Resistance? By what logic or evidence, moreover, does rule by the mullahs of Islam's ultramontanists merit the appellation "Republican"? There is no pretense in Iran but that under Khomeini the clergy would exert the decisive powers.

Lady Antonia Fraser, the very talented biographer of Mary, Queen of Scots, and (shortly) Charles II, is one of the skeptics. She's struck by the irony that many radical feminists were pushing for the ayatollah, among whose prime purposes is the restoration of the male supremacy much undermined by the shah. I suppose Khomeini's anti-Americanism is enough to get left-wing women to overlook their own interests. For such women, Lady Antonia has what she calls 'Tollah Teasers. Some of them focus on the laws of property, divorce, suffrage (if there'll be any at all), *purdah*. I saw one militant female squirm under Fraser's provocation by unpleasant truth. In Islam, women are not permitted to pray in the mosque. That tells you something about their relationship with God and may suggest something about their role in civil society.

SAVAK pulled out prisoners' fingernails. Khomeini promises to cut off arms, stone, lash, kill—all depending on the offense to religious code, determined by only the Lord may know what kind of religious tribunal. SAVAK's practices were finally an embarrassment to the shah's allies, even to the shah himself. But the promises of Khomeini will probably not embarrass anyone. The intellectual curse that "everything is relative," the will to sympathize with barbarians, these will justify everything. And that is decline.

M.P.

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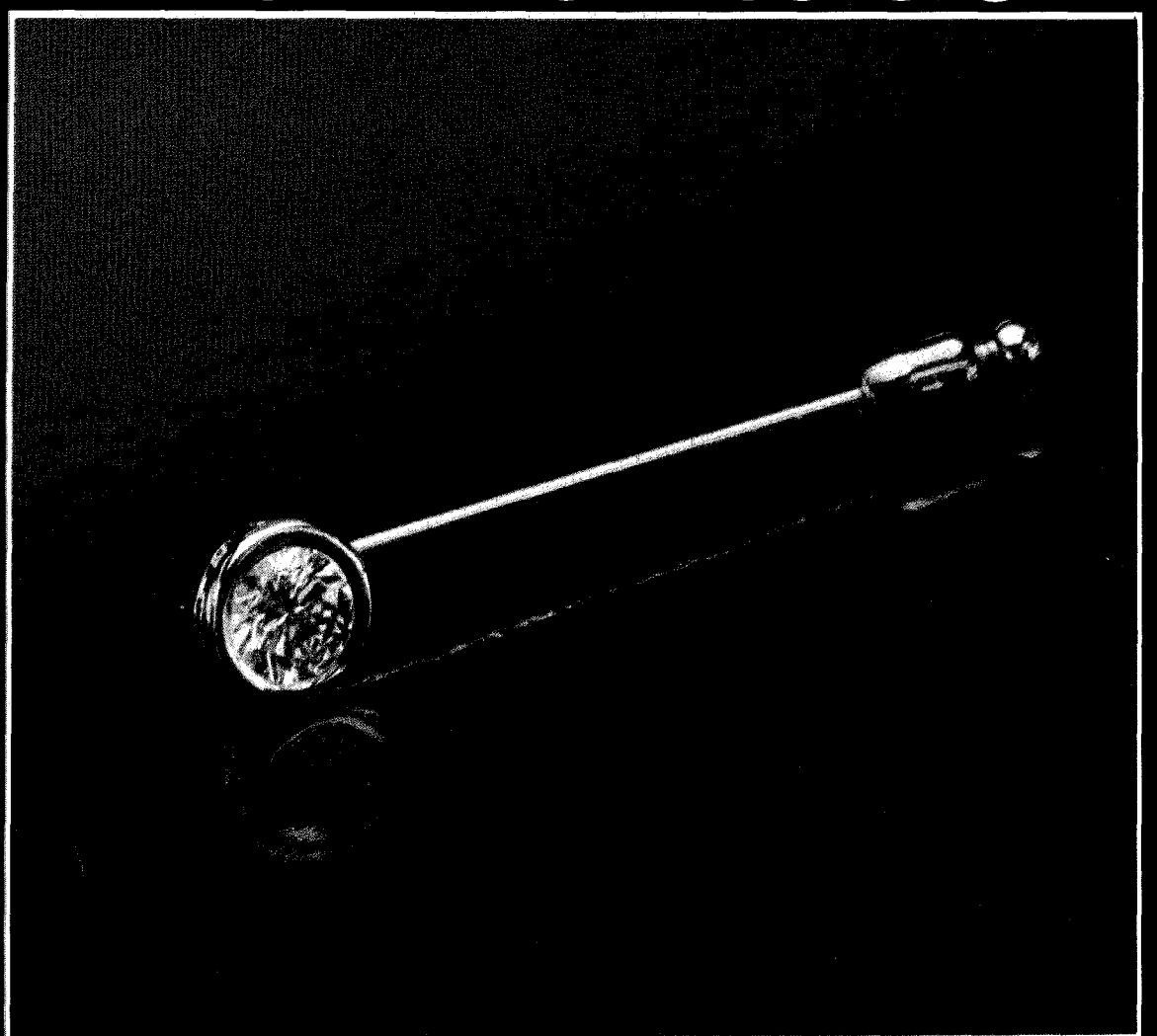

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